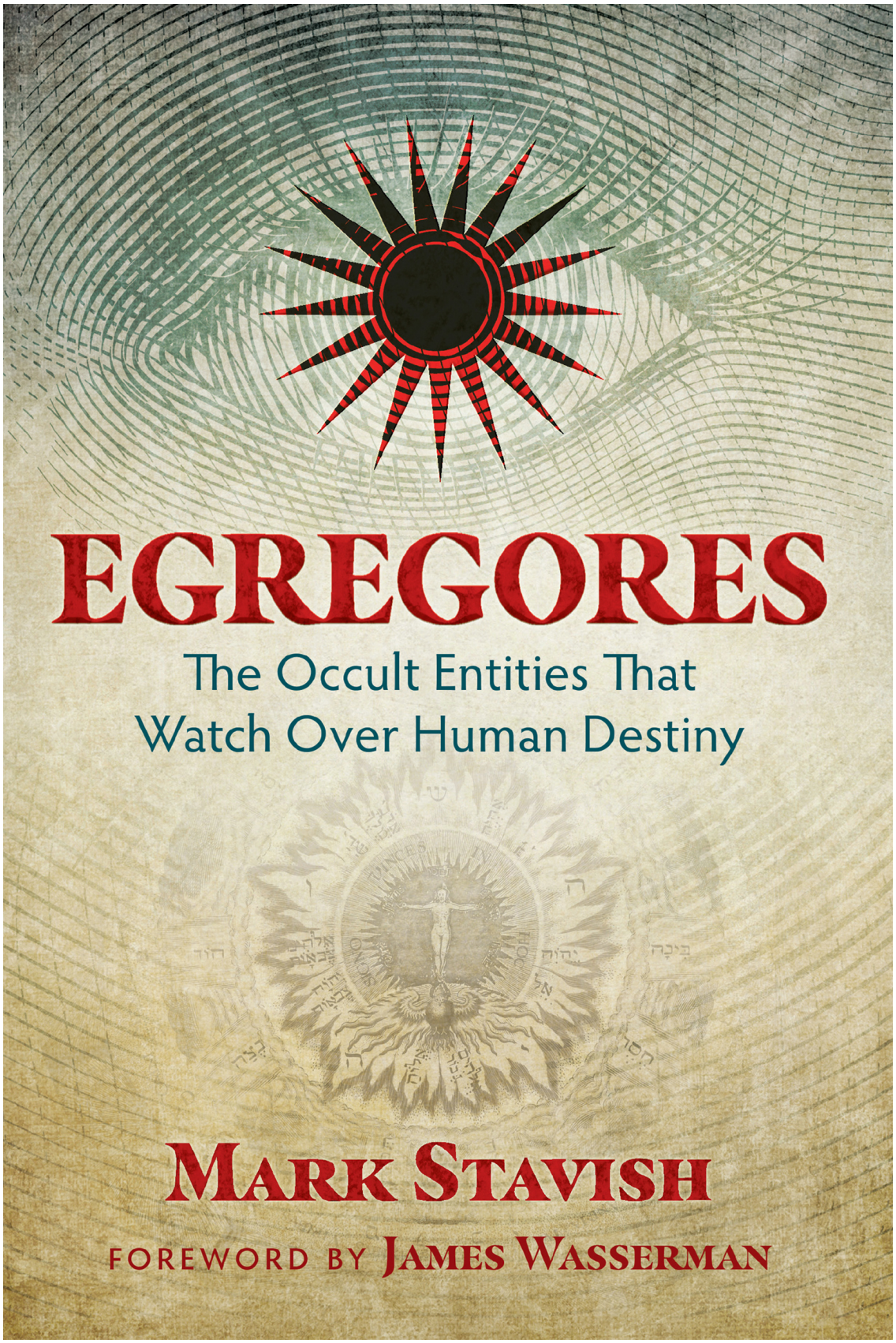
EGREGORES

The Occult Entities That Watch Over Human Destiny

MARK STAVISH

FOREWORD BY JAMES WASSERMAN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Inner Traditions
Rochester, Vermont

This book is dedicated to everyone who enters onto the path of self-awakening. The journey begins as a strange mix of confusion and optimism, and, if all goes well, ends in clarity and joy, with a strong touch of humor thrown in as well. May this book make your path smoother and swifter.

EGREGORES

"*Egregores: The Occult Entities That Watch Over Human Destiny* marks a major turning point in popular esotericism, with Mark Stavish tackling head-on our society's most pressing issue—the *psychic and physical embodiment of ideologies and systems*—with a penetrating and insightful text addressing the hidden life of thoughtforms as they emerge in our culture through mass movements, fundamentalist sects, corporate branding, and identity politics. Put down the fake news, pick up this book, and find out why Enoch warns us that the cosmic control system's been put on divine probation!"

DAVID METCALFE, EDITOR IN CHIEF OF THRESHOLD: *JOURNAL OF INTERDISCIPLINARY CONSCIOUSNESS STUDIES*

"It is a memorable day when the concept of the egregore enters one's worldview. While these energy-complexes have been around as long as humanity, this is the first book to explain how they work and what to do about it. Mark Stavish's clear writing and rich examples should convince any reader, whether schooled in esotericism or simply curious about their inner and outer world."

JOSCELYN GODWIN, AUTHOR OF *ATHANASIUS KIRCHER'S THEATRE OF THE WORLD*

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Egregores—you'll look at society around you in new ways."

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"This encyclopedic account of group consciousness as an egregore, a being conceived to have arisen from the mutual psychic activity of serious initiates, traces the egregore idea throughout the history of Western esotericism and even into the practices of Tibetan Buddhism. Butler, Evola, Masters, Lovecraft, Machen, the AMORC and the OTO, and many other sources are quoted so as to give their opinions about the functions and dangers of egregores. It is unlikely that a more comprehensive book on the subject will ever be written."

STEVAN DAVIES, PH.D., AUTHOR OF SPIRIT POSSESSION AND THE ORIGINS OF CHRISTIANITY AND TRANSLATOR OF THE GOSPEL OF THOMAS: A GUIDEBOOK FOR SPIRITUAL PRACTICE

"Suddenly there is a lot of talk about egregores, but what are they? Mark Stavish introduces some fascinating examples of these mysterious thoughtforms as they appear in different contexts from Tibetan Buddhism to the world of modern pop culture. Stavish's book is an important foray into what is still almost virgin territory for researchers."

CHRISTOPHER MCINTOSH, AUTHOR OF *THE ROSICRUCIANS* AND *ELIPHAS LÉVI AND THE FRENCH OCCULT REVIVAL*

"While the egregore is a concept with which most esoteric students are at least somewhat familiar, it is unlikely you would find a commonality of definitions among them. It is very appropriate for this vaguely understood concept to be the subject of a more in-

depth study, and I can think of no better person to do this than Mark Stavish, whose background brings both authority and depth to such a review. The book provides a historical understanding of the origin of the term and its use through the ages, the various types that may exist in passive and active form, and an explanation of them through profound personal experience. This alone makes the book valuable. However, chapter 7 should be required reading for anyone contemplating joining an esoteric order—or any group with a common objective, for that matter. Stavish writes in a comfortable and informative style, and one comes to the end of the book with new information and much to think about. An excellent primer on egregores."

PIERS A. VAUGHAN, AUTHOR OF *RENAISSANCE MAN & MASON* AND TRANSLATOR OF THE SEMINAL FRENCH ESOTERIC WORKS OF *ERRORS & TRUTH* BY LOUIS-CLAUDE DE SAINT-MARTIN AND *ELEMENTARY TREATISE ON PRACTICAL MAGIC BY PAPUS*

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Acknowledgments

This book would not have been possible if it were not for the inspiration and encouragement of several people who pushed me to further investigate and elaborate upon the subject of egregores. I am indebted to the assistance rendered in the production of this book by Richard Steinberg (New York), Alfred DeStefano III (Virginia), and Professor Joscelyn Godwin (New York). I thank everyone at Inner Traditions who had a hand in bringing this book to print. Any errors are completely my own.

It would also have been impossible to write this book if it were not for the support of my wife, Andrea Nerozzi, and our two sons, Luke and Nathaniel. To them I am eternally grateful.

Foreword

James Wasserman

Here is a truly welcome volume in the canon of esoteric literature. So little has been written about the phenomena of the egregore that the word is not even in the Microsoft spell-check dictionary.

And yet, as Mark Stavish points out, an understanding of egregores is a critical part of the journey to spiritual liberation. I believe egregores are both positive and negative. They can inspire or enslave. In either case they must be recognized for what they are so they can either be encouraged as a source of inspiration and creativity or combatted in the quest for psychic freedom.

Egregores can be as simple and familiar as the icons of patriotism such as the uniformed soldier, the singing of the national anthem at a football game, the political rally or speech with the candidate or official surrounded by flags, Arlington Cemetery, the Washington Monument, the Jefferson Memorial, the White House, or the Capitol. For many, these will be considered positive images, whether the culture is American as above, or French with the Eiffel Tower, British with the House of Parliament, or Russian with the colorful Kremlin. All serve to rally citizens to a love of country, alliance with each other, and the embrace of their shared cultural ideology and history—in other words, union with the national egregore.

On the negative side of the patriotic egregore we have the Nazi swastika and the rallies of an enthusiastic and hypnotized mass of people, shamelessly accepting the ravings of a lunatic. Today we have the examples of North Korea and Iran to remind us of the dangers of manipulation against a population's best interest, and certainly against the greater values of political liberty and spiritual freedom. The egregores erected and sustained by tyrants have a mysterious ability to fascinate people, to almost fill the starving bellies created by the contempt of their leaders, to influence the fevered brains of a suicidal crop of martyrs as they march over the cliff to their own deaths like Gadarene swine. In the case of Iran it is particularly disturbing, because, were Iranians to embrace the true historical national egregore, they could celebrate a culture and civilization as old as humankind, one that produced the likes of Omar Khayyam and Shams-i-Tabriz, a history whose elegance and refinement stands as a testament to spiritual people everywhere.

Think now of the symbols of commercial egregores that infest modern life. Take Coca-Cola, for instance, with which you can rot your teeth and expand your belly with the illusion of sophistication and refreshment as you invoke the epidemic of diabetes—this, in virtually any country in the world! Or Marlboro cigarettes, whose iconic cowboy embodied that rough and tough frontier masculinity before he succumbed to the ravages of lung cancer. Then there are the golden arches of McDonald's, heralding obesity and ill health with its faux meat and rock-bottom prices mirrored only by its lack of nutritional value. Or how about the smiling faces of debt-crazed credit card addicts as they proudly display their Visas and Mastercards, prior to the inevitable, kitchen-table, bill-paying ordeal four weeks later.

Communication egregores are built with symbols like the rainbow peacock (NBC) strutting and fretting its hour upon

the stage of fake news, or the omniscient eyeball (CBS), whose command of Truth was long ago sacrificed to the siren call of political propaganda. I am old enough to remember the disdain with which the Soviet Pravda state-controlled newspaper was held in America. And I am also young enough to have seen eight years of adulation and shameless fawning over one regime favored by the media and the subsequent hatred and frothing at the mouth over another, which it despises. The mantra of the *New York Times*—"All the News That's Fit to Print"—is a lie whose object is incitement and the propagation of insane myths and irrational policies designed to steer a proud national legacy into the oncoming pathway of the Mack truck of globalism and cultural self-destruction.

Religious egregores built over thousands of years are still capable of indoctrinating people everywhere. What is it that gives power to the crucifix, whose doctrine of original sin and obedience to the appointed hierarchy guides so many people into so much unhappiness? The crescent and star are symbols of a teaching that—taken to its lowest level—taps in to a group mind that includes suicide, murder, female genital mutilation, and an embrace of collectivism dictating everything from bathing to breakfast. The six-pointed star and its associated doctrines of separation and victimhood, while clinging to the status of God's chosen people, is another resilient egregore that could well be improved upon.

If you turned on a news broadcast or visited a website during most of 2017, you were likely to find a group of violent uncontrolled people battling the traditional established national egregore of Free Speech. The ability for citizens to freely engage in meaningful political discourse was hymned into existence by Thomas Jefferson and the other Founders, enshrined in the Bill of Rights as America's first enumerated freedom, and ignited in popular culture again in the 1960s with the Berkeley Free Speech

Movement. I imagine poor old Mario Savio turning over in his grave at the antics of Antifa and others as Berkeley was turned into a war zone by leftist-inspired censorship storm troopers and jackbooted, mask-wearing street gangs. Americans watched a respected egregore being turned on its head as police stood idly by in passive acceptance, as ordered by the cowards and political malcontents who sign their paychecks.

Then there is the category of individual and personalized psychological egregores. As one builds and succumbs to bad habits, thought-forms are built in the aura that sustain such behavior against one's best interests or the most resolute determination to improve. Perhaps the simplest example is the laziness that precludes exercise! How often the most fervent intentions—whether for spiritual, physical, or psychological advancement—are thwarted by the obstinacy of habit, the negative egregore that has sucked power from the individual in order to sustain its own independent existence.

In 2001, I described spiritual secret societies in my book *The Templars and the Assassins.* I wrote of the innumerable myths and legends of teachers of wisdom who have been described as bringing the gifts of civilization and spiritual teachings to humankind. I wrote that they have been conceived and described as gods, angels, spirits, and even extraterrestrial intelligences. I mentioned the characterization of inner plane Adepts, by which such beings are often described in the literature of Western occultism.

I discussed how these beings are viewed by the spiritual societies that embrace them, and that a positive interaction can be established by the interpenetration of the three- and four-dimensional worlds, to the betterment of both.

Members of mystical secret societies may believe they are in contact with higher intelligences who are guiding the societies through invisible channels. These intelligences are often perceived as having enlisted themselves in support of the secret society in order to share their wisdom with aspirants psychically attuned to the emanation of their energies. The society may then be conceived of by its membership as a three-dimensional manifestation for the evolutionary workings of higher consciousness.

These are the living egregores that are built and sustained by group ritual, shared practices, hierarchical teachings, and inner doctrines of such a society. Mark Stavish describes the model of the Ancient Mystical Order Rosae Crucis (AMORC) in some detail. My experience has been with a different group, but there are notable similarities.

Again, it must be kept in mind that egregores are living beings. They must be fed and nurtured. I think spiritual interactions with them can be healthy as long as such interactions remain pure and positive. Both the aspirant and the egregore must be protected against corruption by the group's leaders and the tendency for many spiritual societies to become lackadaisical, to devolve into a culture of laziness and sloppiness. The egregores attracted by such a society will be as misguided as the membership itself. Spiritual hygiene is as important for the members of a group as it is for the egregores that sustain and inform it.

One of the most interesting parts of Mark's book is his discussion of freeing oneself from the power of egregores one has previously accepted and then rejected in the interest of Truth and the evolution of one's personal path. As discussed in some detail in my memoir *In the Center of the Fire,* I wrestled with this problem twice. In fact, if you count my political journey from Socialism to Constitutional Libertarianism, it was three times.

Battling for one’s freedom from the egregores one has willingly embraced and then moved beyond can be a fight for life and death. Perhaps in less dramatic language, it can be considered the conflict between courage and fear or integrity—and caving in. The psychic and psychological chains and tendrils that wrap themselves around the adherent of various belief structures and mechanisms have an unbelievable power. I do not know if it is possible to avoid making the mistakes in the first place. In my own life, I have profited immensely from the battle to maintain my sanity through these ordeals, which in some cases have lasted years. Such conflict breeds strength, for muscles are developed by the strain of exercise.

Yet remember that muscle growth is actually a process of muscle tearing followed by muscle repair to result in enhanced muscle mass. In other words there is pain, danger, and suffering—all elements that make for authentic initiation. Such themes will accompany the escape from and rejection of egregores that no longer serve the spiritual needs of the individual. Spirituality is individualization—the acknowledgment and creation of the true self is the path of the mysteries.

Truth is the guardian of Liberty. Fear not. If you have the courage and discrimination to do the next right thing, to seek after spiritual impeccability in your own life, I firmly believe you will succeed. Go forth!

James Wasserman is the author of several books, including *The Templars and the Assassins*, *The Temple of Solomon, The Mystery Traditions,* and *In the Center of the Fire: A Memoir of the Occult 1966–1989*. A longtime student of the occult and a member of the Ordo Templi Orientis since 1976, he lives in New York City.

Preamble

The following is from the Corpus Hermeticum, Book 16.

12. Every kind of creature is sustained and nourished by the Sun. As the spiritual world embraces the physical and fills it out with every different kind of form, so the Sun embraces everything in the cosmos, raising up and strengthening all generations. And when they are spent and ebbing away he receives them back.

13. The choir of spirits, or rather choirs, are placed under the command of the Sun; “choirs” because there are many different kinds of powers. They are set in formation under the stars, and are equal in number to them. Thus arrayed they serve each of the stars. Some of these powers are good and some are evil by nature, that is to say in their activity. For the essence of a spiritual power is its activity. There are also some who are a mixture of good and evil.

14. All these spirits have been given authority over affairs upon earth and over turbulences there. They cause a variety of disorders both publicly in cities and among nations, but also in the life of individuals. For they shape our souls after themselves and arouse them by residing in our sinews, in our marrow, veins, and arteries, and even our brain, penetrating as deep as our very entrails.

19. *Through these instruments God Himself creates all this, and all things partake of God; since this is so, they are God. Therefore in creating all things, he creates Himself; and He can never cease to create, for He Himself never ceases to be. As God has no end, so His handiwork has neither beginning nor end.*[1] [emphasis added]

INTRODUCTION

Angels, Women, and War in the Heavens

The gods do not like it when one of their cattle should be free!

INDIAN PROVERB

For those interested in the academic study of esotericism, the concept of *egregores* may simply be seen as a quaint relic of an earlier time, a holdover from our ancient past and therefore of little practical consequence. For those on the spiritual path, any spiritual path, being introduced to the concept of egregores is often a life-changing encounter. Instantly many old ideas—and experiences—are made clear, and a field of questions opens up before them. They reexamine their path in a new light and find that regardless of their being part of an organized group or a solo practitioner, large areas of their practice were under the indirect or direct influence of one or more psychic entities of which they were completely unaware.

For those engaged in practical occultism; that is, the manipulation of energies for some kind of spiritual or material result, egregores are often nothing new, *but rarely understood*—as too often they are given the status of a priori goodness. Many groups speak in veiled but confident and positive terms about their leader or group (and by

extension its members) being connected to a powerful egregore, an *inner contact,* or some similar term. When examined in the light of this monograph and more traditional ideas associated with egregores, these students can reevaluate their connections to these invisible forces and decide for themselves if these contacts have been beneficial or detrimental to their personal awakening.

WHAT IS AN EGREGORE?

The word *egregore* is Greek in origin and is derived from *égrégoros,* meaning “wakeful” or “watcher.” The word is found in the Book of Enoch wherein it is described as an angelic being. The Book of Enoch is ascribed to Enoch, the grandfather of Noah, and, while noncanonical, it has attracted some theological and historical interest by the major Jewish and Christian denominations for a section of it known as the Book of the Watchers. This section is thought to have been written around 300 BCE. The only extant version that exists is in the South Semitic language of Ge’ez, originating around the Horn of Africa. While the original text may have been in Hebrew or Aramaic, no complete early text in either language survives. The main themes of this book—held in common by many mystics, practitioners of the occult, and even Christian fundamentalists—concern two hundred “fallen” angels, their interbreeding with human women, the subsequent creation of a race of giants (Nephilim) whose destruction in the biblical Flood receives mention in Genesis, and a coming apocalyptic battle between good and evil. A mention of the Nephilim from the Book of Enoch is as follows:

> And they became pregnant, and they bare great giants, whose height was three hundred ells: Who

> consumed all the acquisitions of men. And when men could no longer sustain them, the giants turned against them and devoured mankind. And they began to sin against birds, and beasts, and reptiles, and fish, and to devour one another's flesh, and drink the blood.[1]

And:

> And Azâzêl taught men to make swords, and knives, and shields, and breastplates, and made known to them the metals of the earth and the art of working them, and bracelets, and ornaments, and the use of antimony, and the beautifying of the eyelids, and all kinds of costly stones, and all colouring tinctures. And there arose much godlessness, and they committed fornication, and they were led astray, and became corrupt in all their ways. Semjâzâ taught enchantments, and root-cuttings, Armârôs the resolving of enchantments, Barâqîjâl, taught astrology, Kôkabêl the constellations, Ezêqêêl the knowledge of the clouds, Araqiêl the signs of the earth, Shamsiêl the signs of the sun, and Sariêl the course of the moon.[2]

The most commonly used definition (taken from Wiktionary.org) is as follows: "(*occult*) autonomous psychic entity composed of and influencing the thoughts of a group of people." However, there is a second definition, an older, more significant, and perhaps frightening one. Here, an egregore is more than an "autonomous entity composed of and influencing the thoughts of a group of people"; it is also the *home or conduit for a specific psychic intelligence of a nonhuman nature connecting the invisible dimensions with the material world in which we live.* This, in fact, is the true

source of power of the ancient cults and their religious-magical practices.

Mouni Sadhu, a Polish occultist of the French-Russian Martinist lineages,[1] defines an egregore in his seminal work, *The Tarot,* as “a collective entity, such as a nation, state, religions and sects and their adherents, and even minor human organizations. The structure of Egregors is similar to that of human beings. They have physical bodies (that is, collectively all the bodies of those who belong to the particular Egregor) and also astral and mental ones; the Egregor being the sum total of all these elements.”[3]

To my knowledge, the only modern scholar of esoteric philosophy who has written about the importance of the egregore is Joscelyn Godwin, of Colgate University in New York State, who dedicates a chapter, aptly titled “The Power of the Egregore,” to it in his book *The Golden Thread.*[4]

Godwin traces the origin of egregores, at least in the West, to the semi-animistic beliefs of ancient Greece and Rome and the intimate relationship that the ancient cult practices had on daily life as well as foreign affairs. This is critical, because here we see that every aspect of life has a sacred component to it, and, that in the proper execution of one’s duties, the visible and invisible worlds are kept in harmony from the perspective of classical religion (and, with it, politics).

The study of these relationships and their method of implementation became a specialized focus of the priestly class. These rituals and their attendant sacrifices were considered vital to the health of the family, community, city—even the empire (or later the nation). Within this larger collective body the individual lived their life and performed their duty and experienced their destiny as the gods dictated. The work of the various cults (in a world in which the average life span was thirty-five years of age) was

primarily to aid in gaining the favor of the gods in an environment where material well-being and health were essential and in which little medical science existed for the preservation of life and limb. When this fact is combined with a dominant notion of little or no hope of an afterlife—the general belief in the ancient world, with Egypt being the exception—making the most of what life span one had was critical.

As Godwin points out, given the relationship of the visible and invisible in which the grave was seen as one's final destination, the ancient gods to whom cults were dedicated and offerings made in some ways may have needed human religion more than humans did.

> There is an occult concept of the "egregore," a term derived from the Greek word for "watcher." It is used for an immaterial entity that "watches" or presides over some earthly affair or collectivity. The important point is that an egregore is augmented by human belief, ritual, and especially by sacrifice. If it is sufficiently nourished by such energies, the egregore can take on a life of its own and appear to be an independent, personal divinity, with a limited power on behalf of its devotees and an unlimited appetite for further devotion. It is then believed to be an immortal god or goddess, an angel, or a daimon.[5]

Egregores were formed to watch over city-states, the Republic, and the Empire itself. As long as offerings and devotion continued, the prosperity and well-being of the city or Empire was thought to be assured. *However, if new cults came into being and the energies of worship were directed elsewhere, the agreement would be broken and the egregore would cease to support the land and its people.*

Esoterically, this can be seen as the reason for the collapse of the Roman Empire. When its old gods and goddesses were no longer sustained by the people, they in turn could no longer support Rome or its territories. In short, the spiritual death of the Roman Empire can be seen in what Godwin terms *the natural tolerance of polytheism.* By accepting new religious practices insofar as they did not challenge governmental authority, a slow draining-off of energy from traditional cults and their attendant egregores began. But it doesn't end there. The real death stroke lay in the nature of these new religions. These mystery cults from Greece, Persia, Egypt, Palestine, and Syria offered something Roman religion did not—personal salvation or, rather, survival after physical death.

Based on these metaphysical premises, Godwin suggests—and we agree—that for a city, nation, or empire to exist, its devotees must be focused on life in the material world to some degree (we will say more about this later). When their direction is turned otherworldly, the cults of family and state, the cults of blood, become weakened and are simply a jumping-off point for the individual instead of an end in themselves. When combined with the demands of time and intellectual and emotional commitment that mystery religions demanded of their members—initiates of the secret way—little or no energy was left for the traditional egregore. As Godwin says:

> I am suggesting that the rise and fall of nations is intimately bound up with their relations with their gods; and that these are real entities, even though they are not the eternal all-powerful beings they are reputed to be. This seems to be a theory worthy of consideration by anyone who can admit that the universe is a very strange place, and that there is plenty of room in it for beings bigger than mankind.

> If such beings exist, it is only prudent to take an account of them. Every civilization in the past has done so, after its fashion.[6]

We see in the above paragraph a notion well known to many, yet often ignored—the famous quote from the Emerald Tablet: “That which is above is like that which is below; and that which is below is like that which is above; to accomplish the work (or miracle) of the One thing.”[7] The egregore exists at both ends of the spectrum as well as across it: from the dense material world to the subtle and intangible psychic domain.

We also hear this concept repeated in the Christian scriptures, although as we will see there is disagreement among authorities on whether this constitutes an egregore in either the classical or modern sense of the word (paraphrased from Matthew 18:20): “When two or more are gathered in my name, I will be in the midst of them.”

THREE QUESTIONS THIS BOOK WILL ADDRESS

All of the above-referenced points then give rise to three questions:

1. What is the impact of an egregore on the individual, his destiny, and free will?
2. Who or what manages the collective physical body of the group by way of the invisible?
3. How is the management performed and to what ends?

It is these questions that we will answer to some degree in the following pages. In addition, we will look at the critical process whereby one can free oneself from the influence of egregores, as well as the means of directly destroying them when the need arises.

We bring this information to your attention so that as a student of the esoteric path you may make a conscious and informed decision about your participation in various egregores. If your work is more academic than practical, then at least you will be aware of the critical role this concept has had and continues to play, not only in esoteric groups but in certain political and economic activities as well as in various forms of entertainment, and how they are easily supported by the mass media.

To this end, let us allow the words of the twentieth-century French alchemist Jean Dubuis to act as our friend and guide. The following excerpt is from the lessons of instruction he wrote for the Philosophers of Nature, an esoteric school in which no collective rituals were held so as to limit the formation of any egregore.

> We have serious reasons in insisting that each student work on acquiring the greatest possible mental freedom for himself in the physical world. Genuine initiation is a complete liberation. How can your Higher Self help you liberate yourself if you don’t do it for yourself in the realm already accessible to you?
>
> A second significant reason for insisting on this point is the subject of egregores. What is an egregore? It is the psychic and astral entity of a group. All members of a group, a family, a club, a political party, a religion, or even a country, psychically included in the egregore of the

> organization to which they belong. . . . Therefore, each individual who is involved in a group receives the influences of the egregores, that is the astral counterpart of the group, in his psyche. This process is unconscious. The resulting drawbacks are, first, some perturbing psychic influences in the majority of cases, and second, a restriction of inner freedom. It is impossible to free oneself from certain egregores. . . . However, we should free ourselves from all egregores that are not essential. . . . Be cautious . . . mental freedom should not transform us into dropouts or misfits. It should simply open the freedom of the inner path while liberating us from unnecessary obstacles.[8]

Previous publications in the IHS Monograph Series have addressed the existence and nature of egregores (*Studies in Poltergeists, Obsession, and Possession,* volume 6) and how to modify one's relationship to them (*Wisdom's Bliss and Khamael's Spear,* volume 7) and even acknowledge the existence of a major beneficial egregore and its principal symbol (*Rosicrucianism for the New Millennium,* volume 9). However, *this* book is the only publication of which we are aware to date that is dedicated exclusively to examining the existence of egregores, our relationship to them, and how that relationship can be modified, severed, and—if need be—how the egregore may be destroyed. It is our sincere desire that you will find it of value on your journey on the Path of Return.

1

Tibetan Buddhism and the Reality of the Egregore

Although the term *egregore* is unique to Western esoteric and occult practices, the ideas it embodies are not. In fact they are widespread, and in some form they are the basis of all spiritual and magical practices across the globe. Among the most powerful of religious egregores in the world today are those of Islam and Buddhism; but Tibetan Buddhism in particular has provided us with the most potent glimpses of this ancient practice on an organized and national level, well into the twentieth century.

Tibetan Buddhism began to appear in popular culture with its mention in the writings of the Russian occultist, spirit medium, and author Helena Petrovna Blavatsky and the Theosophical Society that she cofounded in the late nineteenth century. With the mythologizing of Tibet as a land of vast spiritual erudition—home to “ascended masters” of the “Great White Brotherhood”—and the convoluting of the Shamabhala mythology and prophecies with the ideas of Agarttha and Shangri-La in various Western schools, Tibetan lamas were poised for greatness by the time of their arrival in the West after the flight of the Dalai Lama to India in 1959. Only one more thing was needed to ensure the safe passage of Tibetan Buddhism into the fringes and later mainstream of Western society,

and that came in the person of Alexandra David-Néel (1868–1969).

ALEXANDRA DAVID-NÉEL: A LINK BETWEEN EAST AND WEST

Alexandra David-Néel, a linguist, French orientalist, practicing Buddhist, and profound historian of religion, was born to be a woman of adventure. Her father was a Huguenot Freemason, and her mother was of Scandinavian and Siberian extraction with roots in Catholicism. Her parents met in Belgium, where her father, Louis David, a poor schoolteacher and publisher of a republican journal, was in exile. By the age of eighteen Alexandra had traveled modestly at her own expense and was involved in a variety of religious austerities taken from the biographies of saints in books found in the family library. Like many other people of the period, she was drawn to the Theosophical Society, joined a variety of secret societies, and even reached the 30th-degree of mixed Masonry.

Like her father, she leaned toward anarchistic, revolutionary, and, with it, feminist politics. However, her views were at odds with her blue-blood counterparts, preferring an emphasis on the practicality of economic equality over voting rights. In 1889, at the age of twenty-one, she converted to Buddhism and began the formal training of her career as an orientalist. She would learn English, Sanskrit, and Tibetan prior to leaving for the Orient. Her journey east, however, would be the result of her winning first prize in a competition that would make her the first singer at the Hanoi Opera House in Indochina in the years of 1895 to 1897. Singing and composition would serve her well professionally and personally until her marriage in 1904 to French-born engineer Philippe Néel.

By the time of her marriage, Alexandra David-Néel had a small fortune at her disposal. In 1911 she undertook her third trip to India, a trip that was planned to last eighteen months but that would extend to fourteen years. During her time in Sikkim, David-Néel met the Thirteenth Dalai Lama, who was in exile at the time. She received extensive education and training, undertaking retreats as well as utilizing the advanced methods of *tummo,* or the yoga practice of Inner Fire. She became famous in her own right and was widely received by Buddhist authorities during her travels. In time she would also receive a great deal of attention from the foreign press as well. Her fame would spread, even if her desire to reform Buddhism did not. Her first book, *My Journey to Lhasa,* was published in 1927 and was accompanied by speaking engagements and tours, which further enlarged her reputation. Two years later, in 1929, she published her most famous book, *Magic and Mystery in Tibet*. Beat Generation writers Jack Kerouac, Allen Ginsberg, and Alan Watts would be extremely influenced by her teachings.

Through the writings of David-Néel, the idea of the *tulpa* —an animated thoughtform that takes on autonomous existence—entered the vocabulary of Western esotericism and eventually that of the popular culture. Related to the word *tulpa* is a more common idea among schools of Tibetan Buddhism: that of *tulku.* Both tulpa and tulku are related to the idea of the mind being able to create a “thoughtform,” an idea that can gain a certain amount of functional vitality and longevity for a specific purpose.

TULKU AND TULPA: THE POWER OF THE MIND IN ACTION

As Alexandra David-Néel wrote in *Magic and Mystery in Tibet:*

> The power of producing magic formations, tulkus or less lasting and materialized tulpas, does not, however, belong exclusively to such mystic exalted beings. Any human, divine or demoniac being may be possessed of it. The only difference comes from the degree of power, and this depends on the strength of the concentration and the quality of the mind itself.[1]

Possibly the single greatest contribution in all of David-Néel's writings is the idea of the tulpa's ability to develop a mind of its own. She writes, "Once the tulpa is endowed with enough vitality to be capable of playing the part of a real being, it tends to free itself from its maker's control. This, say Tibetan occultists, happens nearly mechanically, just as the child, when his body is completed and able to live apart, leaves its mother's womb."[2] Yet, while David-Néel claimed to have created a tulpa fashioned in the image of a jolly medieval monk, a creation that later developed a life of its own and had to be destroyed, she also raised the possibility that her experience was illusory. "I may have created my own hallucination," she writes, although she also reports that others could see the visualized monk as well.[3]

In *The Secret Oral Teachings in Tibetan Buddhist Sects,* David-Néel further elaborates on the difference between the terms *tulpa* and *tulku.*

> The Tibetans distinguish between tulkus and tulpas. . . . Tulpas are more or less ephemeral creations which may take different forms: man, animal, tree, rock, etc., at the will of the magician who created

them, and behave like the being whose form they happen to have. These tulpas coexist with their creator and can be seen simultaneously with him. In some cases they may survive him, or, during his life, free themselves from his domination and attain a certain independence. The tulku, on the contrary, is the incarnation of a lasting energy directed by an individual with the object of continuing a given kind of activity after his death. . . .

The Tibetan *doubtobs* [Author's note: . . . he who has "succeeded," who has "accomplished"; this implies, who has acquired supernormal powers . . . siddhas in Sanskrit] are considered to be experts in the art of creating *tulpas* [Author's note: The belief in tulpas is universal in Tibet and there are many stories about them, some of these stories being terribly tragic], imaginary forms which are a sort of robot which they control as they wish, but which, sometimes, manage to acquire some kind of autonomous personality.

It is also stated that during their periods of deep meditation the [initiates] surround themselves with an impassable occult protective zone extending at times right around their hermitage, when they adopt the life of an anchorite.

Novices who are training themselves according to the methods of the Secret Teachings, are sometimes advised to exercise themselves in creating mentally around themselves an environment completely different from that which is considered real. For example . . . a forest . . . The usefulness . . . is to lead the novice to understand the superficial nature of the sensations and perceptions. . . . The relative world is close to the imaginary world because, as has been said, error

> and illusion dominate it. Most of humanity is unconscious of the fact that they live and move in a world of phantasmagoria.[4]

In her book *Magic and Mystery in Tibet,* David-Néel recounts a conversation she had with a lama about the subjectivity of thought-forms. When David-Néel expressed the notion that those who died during various rites died from fear, and the visions were of their own imagination, the lama to whom she expressed these thoughts replied:

> According to that it must follow that a man who does not believe in the existence of tigers may feel confident that none of them would ever hurt him even if he were confronted by such a beast. Visualizing mental formation, either voluntary or not, is a most mysterious process. What becomes of these creations? May it not be that like children born of our flesh, these children of our mind separate their lives from or escape our control, and play parts of their own?
>
> Must we not also consider that we are not the only ones capable of creating such formations? And if such entities exist in the world, are we not liable to come into touch with them, either by the will of their maker or from some other cause? Could one of these causes not be that, through our mind or through our material deeds, we bring about the conditions in which these entities are capable of manifesting some kind of activity?
>
> I will give you an illustration: . . . If you are living on a dry spot of ground at some distance from the banks of a river, fishes will never approach you. But cut a channel between the river and your dwelling-

> place and dig a pond in the dry spot of ground. Then, as the water runs in it, fishes will come from the river and you will see them moving before your eyes.
>
> It is only prudent to beware of opening channels without due consideration. Few, indeed, suspect what the great store-house of the world which they tap unconsciously contains. . . . One must know how to protect oneself against the tigers to which one has given birth, as well as against those that have been begotten by others.[5]

FOUR TYPES OF SPIRITUAL PRACTICE

In *Initiations and Initiates in Tibet,* David-Néel elaborates on the various types of rituals, or *dubthabs*. *Dubthab* is the Tibetan word for the Sanskrit term *sadhana,* often translated as “practice” or sometimes “liturgy.” However, as David-Néel points out, its literal translation is “means to success” or “means to accomplish something.” What are those accomplishments? In the practices of Tibetan Vajrayana they are four in number.

The following are David-Néel’s translation of the terms. The words in brackets at the end have been added and are the more common modern translations.

1. Gentle or pacific (*shiwa*) for obtaining long life, health, good fortune. [Pacifying]
2. Expanding (*gyaispa*) for obtaining wealth and fame. [Increasing]
3. Potent (*wangwa*) for obtaining influence and power. [Magnetizing]

4. Terrible (*tagpo* [*dragpo*]) for obtaining the power to cause evil, to kill or destroy in whatsoever manner, by occult methods. [Wrathful]

How can these results be attained? Some answer that they are the work of deities who grant their aid to those who reverence them in the required manner. Others affirm that the aim of the *dubthabs* [initiates] is not to worship the deities but rather to bring them into sub jugation; they also say that the man who is versed in their ritual is capable of forcing both gods and demons to place their power at his service and to obey him in everything.

These opinions are current [1920–30s] in Tibet, but both of them, according to more learned Lamas, denote a lack of understanding of the theories on which the *dubthabs* are based.

In reality, judging by the explanations we find in the works of ancient authors and those given orally by contemporary masters of mysticism, the method employed consists of projecting, like images on a screen, deities mentally conceived and in imagining a series of changes through which they pass, in the course of very prolonged and complicated rites.

The beings evoked by the *dubpapo* are not imaginary creations of any kind, they are always well-known personalities in the world of gods or demons, who have been revered or propitiated for centuries by millions of believers.

Tibetan occultists say that these beings have acquired a sort of real existence due to the countless thoughts that have been concentrated on them. [Author’s footnote: The Tibetans insist strongly upon this point. I have given instances of it several times in *With Mystics and Magicians in Tibet*. See more especially page 147.]

Similar theories are expressed in the Sacred Scriptures of India. In the *Brihad Aranyakopanishad,* 1, 4, 10, which is regarded as prior to Buddhism, we find these words: “Whosoever worships a deity with the thought in his mind: ‘He is another, another am I,’ does not know; like a beast, he is *used* by the gods. As verily many beasts maintain a man, so every man maintains the gods.”

How do men do this? By feeding the subjective personalities of their gods on the worship they pay them, a Hindu ascetic told me.

Enlightened Lamas are fully aware of the nature of the characters they evoke, but they assert that, by this kind of mystic sport, it is possible to obtain results which could never, or only with great difficulty, have been obtained otherwise. What is the explanation of this oddity?

. . . *In identifying himself with them [deities], the* dubpapo *places himself in communion with an accumulation of energy vastly superior to what he could produce by his own efforts*. [emphasis added]

Contact with this mysterious power may prove beneficial. . . . Nevertheless, if he is lacking in skill—mainly in the . . . “terrible” category—he may be ill-treated and even killed by the mighty personalities that his mental concentration has attracted.

The mystics of Tibet consider that gods and demons, paradise and hell, exist only for those who believe in them. Although existing in a latent state, the god created and kept alive by the imagination of the masses has power only over the man who comes in contact with him. A filament is necessary in order for that the electricity dormant in a storage battery may cause the light to appear in the lamp. This comparison explains with a fair degree of accuracy what is in the minds of the Tibetans.

The majority of the [initiates] are not aware of the dual origin of the deities. . . . They do not comprehend that the latter are born of the mental concentration of the masses of believers and again, temporarily created by the thought of the officiating monk who acts as a magnet attracting these already existing occult forces or personalities. [emphasis added]

Those who succeed in comprehending the subjective nature of the deities evoked during the [ritual] are advised by the masters not to regard these deities as negligible phantoms. . . . The mentally created deities are similar to those supposed to inhabit Paradises [Buddha worlds] and other sacred places. In the very words of the Tibetan text, "they should be regarded as the two-faced unity which appears as form and is, in essence, the formless Void."

The officiating monk should also conceive of the different deities in the diverse parts of his body and understand that they all exist in himself. The better to fix this idea in the minds of those who practice the [rituals], most of the latter end by causing to re-absorb therein the gods and demons that have been projected by him.

The celebration of the simplest *dubthabs* requires three or four hours; the rite must be repeated for several successive days. Prolonged preparation is needed for the celebration of the grand *dubthabs* [rites of accomplishment/sadhana], with the requisite initiations by a Lama possessed of the necessary powers. One must first also learn by heart whole volumes of liturgical offices, and have an exact knowledge of the ceremonial, the different meditations dealing with the necessary phases of the rite, etc. The rite must be repeated until the *dugpapo* [*sic*] has mastered its exoteric, esoteric, and mystical significations, and has in addition seen manifest signs that augur success.[6]

A MODERN EXAMPLE OF THE WAR OF THE EGREGORES

An example of the problems that can arise with the creation and worship of a being through the practice of rituals can easily be seen within the politics of modern Tibet itself. One of the most peculiar problems facing the Dalai Lama, even in exile, is the controversy over the worship of the popular Gelukpa protector deity Dorje Shugden. The gist of the problem comes from the activities of Geshe Kelsang Gyatso and his particular movement, whose principal practice is that of Dorje Shugden.

While the main argument presented concerns religious freedom, or the freedom to worship Dorje Shugden, the ramifications are considerably greater. According to Isabel Hilton, in her book *The Search for the Panchen Lama,* "[Dorje Shugden] had the reputation of being able to impart enormous good fortune to his devotees but also of being extremely vindictive and jealous. One of the Dalai Lama's tutors had encouraged the Dalai Lama himself to worship Dorje Shugden, but the Dalai Lama had decided, as a result of several dreams, that the deity was harmful. He gave up the practice himself, then banned it in all institutions that were connected with his person. This included Gelukpa monasteries and, of course, the government in exile."[7]

Hilton further states, "The origins of the Dorje Shugden dispute lie deep in Gelukpa politics and a controversy too complicated to explore here. But the significance of it pertains to sectarianism in Tibetan Buddhism: the defenders of Dorje Shugden are characterized as Gelukpa fundamentalists who regard the Dalai Lama's association with other Buddhist sects—an association greatly strengthened in exile—as a betrayal of the Gelukpa. By

insisting on worshipping the deity, they attack the Dalai Lama's authority as a true Gelukpa leader."[8]

As mentioned above, Dorje Shugden is in a class of beings thought to be protector deities. Who or what do they protect? Tibetan Buddhism, of course, and that means the Gelukpa version of Tibetan Buddhism. What makes this all the more difficult for many Western students to grasp is the severe sectarian nature of the forces at play here. Not only is Dorje Shugden considered a protector of the Gelukpa, but he is also considered a destroyer of "heretical Buddhist sects," which would include the other schools of Tibetan and non-Tibetan Buddhism. In fact, an argument has been made that this extends to all practices that are not Gelukpa.

So how did Dorje Shugden originate? Apparently, Shugden was only a minor protector (*gylapo*—angry or vengeful spirit) until the nineteenth century, when it became a tool for persecuting the evolving nonsectarian movement of the period. It should be noted that the Gelukpa were also the principal political force or administrative party in Tibet as well, with all Dalai Lamas having been Gelukpa (or related to it) since the installation of the office of the Dalai Lama at the hands of the Mongolians in 1642. As a result, some have seen the Chinese occupation and destruction of Tibet as punishment for—or at least as a result of—the inadequate worship of Dorje Shugden. This includes possible political intrigue around the cult and the court where practices related to Dorje Shugden continued to grow until the 1930s.

In Dorje Shugden we see a sort of apotheosis, or divinization of the human being—the source of the angry ghost often said to have been a condemned prisoner—who is then employed to protect the sect and its adherents. In some schools of occult practice this trapping of a spirit is often rationalized as a form of redemption for its sins. In others it is seen as a form of spiritual slavery, even if some

form of payment is given, as the payment is little more than the food required to keep it alive and employed. It is conceivable that some esoteric teachers have taken their lead from this practice and, like the Egyptian pharaohs, seek to attain a sort of immortality through the prayers, offerings, and petitions of their disciples.

If we are to believe that this is possible, then the accounts of reincarnation and psychic immortality as described in the life of the English-born lay Egyptologist Dorothy Louise Eady (1904–1981), better known as Om Sety, are all the more important. While details of Om Sety's life can be found in *The Search for Om Sety* by Jonathan Cott, for our purposes it is sufficient to note that it is through Eady's dreams that she received a tremendous amount of detailed and previously unknown information about ancient Egypt, which was later confirmed by Egyptologists. More importantly for our work, she stated that Pharaoh Seti I visited her both in dreams and in a near-corporeal state and that he lived in a spiritual domain as ruler just as he had on Earth—a circumstance made possible as a result of practices learned during his training in temples dedicated to his namesake, the Egyptian god Set.

Offerings of food, drink, tobacco, and prayers to the dead, particularly to one's ancestors, strengthens and maintains the collective notion of "family," even if only on a psychological level. It therefore becomes possible that families who achieve renown or are even feared over several generations do so in part because of the egregore they have built up around themselves. This egregore may at first be unconscious, but it soon becomes a focal point of belonging to the family. Such notions as family traditions, business, customs, and pride all contribute to the creation of a clan structure that reaches back in time as well as into the invisible. It is no surprise then that some of these well-

known historical families should either have, or be thought of as having, an actual interest in occult practices.

When a family patriarch or matriarch is established as a spiritual or philosophical head, this formation of dynastic power becomes all the more potent. It should also not be a surprise that many of the religious, spiritual, and esoteric groups existing today were in fact at one time little more than family lineages that grew beyond the confines of a specific bloodline or geographical boundary.

Thus one's position as an important, well-known, and respected teacher in life may be able to accumulate sufficient psychic attention after death to create a sort of "positive limbo" so that dissolution—as some believe—does not happen. Instead, one is held awake and in contact with both the spiritual and material planes through one's created position as intermediary for one's followers. In short, one is able to enjoy the best of both worlds—for a time.

THE POWER OF THE EGREGORE . . . WATCH YOUR DREAMS

These guardians of the various traditions are a mixed blessing as many have discovered, particularly those who have experienced various spiritual crises as they relate to mystical and magical affiliations and orders—and their separation from them in particular. However, the power of an egregore is also that of an ambient entity simply radiating its influence in a given geographic area. Just as we feed, so does it feed. Just as we inhale and exhale, so does it inhale and exhale. The following example is from a private email to the author.

> On Sunday, after both I and my wife woke early, at 4:30 a.m. because of a restless sleep and her having a headache, we were finally able to catch some rest a few hours later. During this period I had the following dream: An older Tibetan Buddhist monk gave a long teaching. He went on in a language I did not understand but there was a translation in my mind. Later in the day during meditation I "found" him again, and asked him his name, and he replied, "Lama Shugden." Today I was informed by two of my clients that the dharma center five miles from my office gave a Dorje Shugden empowerment yesterday, the morning of my dream experience.

LANGUAGE AS A CONTROL MECHANISM

The partial objection to our present discussion that many students of Tibetan Buddhism would make is, in fact, proof of its central importance. Tibetan Buddhism enjoys a privileged position of having adherents—and converts in particular—who look at it only through the narrow range of self-defining concepts. That is, each school defines itself. Any comparison to anything other than Tibetan Buddhism, or Buddhism in general—as defined by the lamas—is rarely done and actively discouraged. Therefore, the discussion is controlled, definitions are controlled, and, with this, the overarching egregore of the sect or school is maintained.

However, it is for this very reason that we can rest assured that in fact few students of Tibetan Buddhism will ever actually read this monograph. Though claiming to want enlightenment and the freedom it mandates, they have simply traded one egregore for another. They have traded one mental organizing structure for a different one. The

exception are those students who truly practice the methods they have been given and in turn are able to recognize those areas of the teachings that are universal and know how to transmit their own awakening in the language and culture in which they have been raised. The majority will simply be playing at Buddhism, pretending to be Tibetan, while never addressing their past or the implications that their choice of path has on their future.

For this reason, drawing the analogy between the Tibetan practices of tulpa, tulku, and their respective sadhanas with that of the Western concept of egregore is critical to making the personal leap that recognizes function and outcomes over format and constructs. In the words of the groundbreaking Tibetologist Herbert Guenther:

> Analogy . . . is a hermeneutical device that opens up a way to an understanding of the many horizon forms of lived experience by making the beholder ponder and establish new connections. That is why symbol and analogy are inextricably interwoven; what is conceived as an analogy on one level or in one direction, becomes a symbol on another level and in another direction. Both play a vital role in quickening, vitalizing, and vivifying the individuation process. Today we witness the destruction of symbols and analogies by an unprecedented reification of them, in the wake of which we ourselves become reduced to manipulatable things that have no individuality of their own. Stories of individuation . . . may come as a timely reminder of looking deeper and farther ahead into the being-ness of our Being.[9]

2

The Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn and Related Egregores

For nearly a century the methods of the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn or those derived from them have defined and dominated magical practices across much of the "magical world." And although French occult author and ceremonial magician Eliphas Lévi may have given the French schools of Rosicrucianism and Martinism (and their related Templar and Gnostic churches) a more integrated relationship with the ideas of an egregore, their British cousins were quick to catch up. This notion of having "inner contacts" or being "a fully contacted school" became both a sales pitch as well as a means of distinguishing one school from another. At the same time, how to be certain if contacts existed or were legitimate became a matter of much debate. In the end, all a student could do was remember the biblical adage (paraphrased from Matthew 7:16), "By their fruits ye shall know them."

For some, the notion of an egregore concerned itself less with being influenced by an angelic or demonic being, and more with being under the influence of once-human and now fully perfected beings or masters. These once-human masters, said to be Adepts of the occult arts and sciences,

having now achieved the highest levels of spiritual illumination, guided humanity along the Path of Return.

These beings were often given a variety of names, such as Unknown Superiors, Invisible Masters, the Great White Brotherhood, or similar high-sounding titles. Even a cursory examination demonstrates that this hierarchy of beings was little more than an occult version of the saints of Christianity, the Righteous Men of Kabbalah, the Hidden Imams of Shi'ism, the Xian of Taoism, or the Bodhisattvas of Buddhism (and Tibetan Buddhism in particular). In fact, the Adepts of the Invisible Brotherhood—Rosicrucian or otherwise—that guide Western students are often described as being beyond sect or creed. They are viewed as masters of *all* traditions and systems.

In particular, they are often described as having characteristics more in common with the Adepts of Eastern systems—Taoism, Tibetan Vajrayana and Dzogchen, and Indian Nath, Aghori, and Avadhuta yogis in particular—than with the notions of holiness described in the Abrahamic religions. Principal among these characteristics is the ability to act on both the physical and psychic realms as an independent being. Unlike some esoteric schools that advocated a complete dissolution of the personality or sense of self, these Adepts realized the balance between individuality and enlightened awareness and existed as self-perfected autonomous beings.

There are exceptions to this idea. For example, where the perfected spiritual being exists but for reasons that are not always made clear they do not have the ability to act directly on the material world and instead require an intermediary of some kind. This of course means that these disembodied intelligences can be contacted directly but also that they may seek to either participate in or create an egregore for a more lasting mechanism of activity.

THE GOLDEN DAWN EGREGORE

The entire essence of an egregore can be summed up in a document known as a Flying Roll. Documents of this type were written by the nineteenth-century British occultist MacGregor Mathers and Wynn Westcott—cofounder of the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn—for use by Second Order members, those who had received the degree of Adeptus Minor (5=6) or above. The papers were circulated among members, and while now they are often easily available up to number 35, the one quoted below is more obscure and does not appear in the original set. However, it can be found in several of the books by Patrick Zalewski, a well-known and respected Adept in the tradition of the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn, and first appeared in his *Secret Inner Order Rituals of the Golden Dawn*.

According to the document, the “etheric link” is the entire basis of the existence of the order. A member’s relationship to the “link” takes place progressively over three stages, the first of which takes place in the Outer Order.

> In the 0=0, the Neophyte is first introduced to the Link, which results in a type of power surge in the aura which expands the aura and heightens its density. It is seen by those present who are clairvoyant as a shimmering green or blue light (depending on the degree of contact). In the four subsequent Elemental Grades that follow, the Link established in the 0=0 is then opened up to receive an impetus of energy tailored to, and in empathy with, the corporeal elements. At this point the aura must be continuously charged through ritual practice and meditation exercise, so that the power-flow through the Link does not close or seal off,

> which it will do if left in the outer Element Grades for too long a period. (For example, spending a couple of years on each Element Grade).[1]

According to the document, if a member leaves or is expelled from the order at this point in their studies the link will seal itself off, thereby severing the person from any psychic connection to the order. However, when a student enters the portal grade, their personal relationship with the link (i.e., egregore) of the order becomes more concrete and definitive.

> From the Portal [Grade] onwards the Link undergoes a definite change. *Being parasitic by nature, it forms a firm shell within the aura itself, which resembles the shape of the body*. [emphasis added] It is translucent and emanates through the aura from subtle centers of the body. Once accepted into the body during the 5=6, it is impregnated into the individual for life, unless the Chiefs who emanate the Link choose to close it down. In the Order one can only reduce the Adept to the rank of Portal, but they have no power to alter or cut the Link. If one advances through the Second Order Grades, this Link is further strengthened by ritual.[2]

The culmination is in the degree of Adeptus Exemptus and means that the member at this point is not only a student but also an officer of a lodge and an integral part of the physical and spiritual health and well-being of the order. “In the final phase at the 7=4 Grade, a Ritual called ‘Transmission of the Etheric Link’ is performed (and usually reserved for those of the Office of Chief or who will succeed

to that Office), where the Link is given in its entirety to the Adept so that they are able to carry on."[3]

The document's description of how the egregore operates psychically is very precise, as is its discussion of how and why new egregores are formed.

> The Link, in its varying stages, could be described as an astral tunnel of sorts, allowing access to certain regions of the astral plane where a contingency of astral entities govern their respective areas. The main theory is that if there are enough links to humankind, more energy is released to man to accomplish something of "the Great Work." Hence, when one obtains initiation with an Order, these links are forged. Basically, this is a two-way communication. *The astral entities need devotion to increase their own power in the astral (by having the devotee send back the impetus through devotion and worship), with the result being the energies of two different worlds are received and converted: a type of perpetual motion that increases as long as both parties are willing to conform.* [emphasis added]
>
> An Esoteric Order usually works from the essential basic theme, but concentrates in different areas of development. When a link is formed, one attunes to working in a particular area to which the astral entities have been designated (from their own plane) to develop.
>
> Direct contact with these astral entities is done via the Link (astral tunnel), in which the Adept travels during skrying trips [astral or visionary journeys] to those planes he wishes to contact.

> There are a number of instances where Adepts, once in the Second Order, find that through their astral abilities they are attracted by entities to work areas other than the Order. In cases like this, the Guardians [of the egregore] have consented to accept them so that they can progress to a certain level; then another Link is forged from that point to another set of entities or Esoteric Order. It must be remembered that even in the astral, there is a certain amount of give and take. In algebraic terminology, “A” must go through “B” to arrive at “C.” The Christian faith is a good example of this, as are the numerous off-shoots of our own Order. In a case like this, once the new Link at “C” is formed, the old one “B” is closed, and a direct link from “A” to “C” is utilized.[4]

The mention of the “astral tunnel” (or what now might be called a “wormhole effect”) is important, because it suggests a direct connection to a particular sphere or level of intelligence-energy-matter without the necessity of having to go through a variety of steps along the way—a sort of “hotline” to an astral entity, if you will. A similar idea is presented in at least one school of Taoism wherein the student undertakes a series of visualizations that will cause them to become aware of a sort of tunnel that will take them to an “astral” location. Here they will meet with a variety of typical characters—royalty or warriors, for instance—and from them receive specific information regarding their path. These tunnels are not to be skipped and are to be followed back in the same manner in which they were used to arrive at the particular heavenly realm.

An example of one of these branches of an egregore forming or taking root in the formation of a new order can be found in the Society of the Inner Light and its later

offshoot, the Servants of the Light (SOL). The Society of the Inner Light was cofounded by British occultist, Christian Qabalist, ceremonial magician, and writer Dion Fortune (1890–1946).

WALTER ERNEST BUTLER: A SEMINAL OCCULTIST

Walter Ernest Butler (1898–1978) is among one of the most important, and often little-known, occultists of the twentieth century. His association with Dion Fortune, British esotericist and occult author Gareth Knight, and British occult author, psychic, and esoteric practitioner Dolores Ashcroft-Nowicki was critical in bridging the gap between the splintering Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn and the adaptation of its rituals and teachings to the general occult public.

In an article titled “The Egregore of a School,” published in 1970 by the Servants of the Light, Butler provides what was for decades a common manner of presenting the idea of an egregore among British-based occultists. What is critical is that in the very first line of the article Butler states that he is about to “speak about something that is very important but which is usually forgotten by the majority of esoteric students.”[5] This fact is vital to an understanding of how the term and idea of an *egregore* became increasingly common in English language occult literature during the second half of the twentieth century.

In the article Butler goes on to point out, as have previous authorities, that the fundamental nature of the egregore consists of collective emotions and that the thoughtform itself is amoral, taking its directions from those connected to it.

From the inner point of view, we may see it as a composite thought-form charged with emotional energy. This energy is evoked from all those who are linked with the thought-form and, if there are those in the group who know something of the psychic mechanism involved, it can be directed upon any chosen target. It is obvious that such energy can be used for good or evil purposes, the intention of those who manipulate the energy within the collective thought-form determining the way it is directed.

As a general rule, the thought-form is built around some person or group of persons, and as the numbers admitted increase, so the power and range of the Egregore increases, and a peculiar reciprocal action takes place. Each member of the group pours energy into the collective thought-form but, equally, into each member there also passes the influence of the group as a whole. This reverse action brings to light certain problems.

It is increasingly apparent to those outside the group that any member of it is being influenced to some degree by the pressure of the collective thinking of all linked with it, *and unless care is taken, the power of independent thought may be reduced. For many people this is something they actually seek, they may feel inadequate in the everyday world and feel that by being linked in this way, they are protected from what they see as aggressive tendencies from other people. Or again, they may feel inadequate to deal with new ideas and situations and feel that the Group mind will do their thinking for them, and they will not be in danger of wrong thinking*. [emphasis added]

> Both these tendencies are unhealthy but they are also common, more particularly in occult and religious or semi-religious circles. Indeed, *where the mental and psychic conditions justify such domination by the collective Group mind for a limited period, such dependence upon the Egregore may even be remedial. But any organization, which makes such dependence mandatory upon all its members, is treading a dangerous and slippery path and will, sooner or later, come to grief.* [emphasis added][6]

Butler then describes the nature of discipline in practical esotericism as the personal decision to follow a chosen teacher; in reality, a form of guru yoga: “The discipline is in fact the deliberate choice of the disciple to follow in the footsteps of one he or she admires. It is a link of admiration and love. Where the object of this love is wise and understanding, such a guru-chela relationship can be of the greatest value, as we have said. But, all too often, it becomes an unhealthy psychic and mental relationship, which like a diseased limb, can poison the rest of the body.”[7]

Dion Fortune used to say that the best way of judging the spiritual health of any organization was not to take its public teachings and statements as proof of its integrity but rather to look closely at the type of person its discipline turned out. . . . Here is the ancient touchstone we can always apply for it is eternally true: “By their fruits shall ye know them.”

To avoid the problems associated with the cult of personality, Butler formed the Servants of the Light along relatively unstructured lines. He explains that “our Egregore is contacted on the Inner Planes, and on the outer levels. Primarily it is linked with and draws its power and authority from the Western Tradition. It is a loosely knit Egregore,

which gives it flexibility, and because of these loose connections to other Traditions it has much to give those who enter upon its course in the spirit of those who desire to know in order to serve."[8]

In the next chapter we will examine how the concept of the egregore spread into the modern culture by way of the occult culture in France and through a discussion of, among other things, its connection to the tarot.

3

The Modern Era and the French Occult Revival

Victor Hugo appears to be the first author to use the word *egregor*e as part of modern language. The word appears in *La Legende des siecles* (*The Legend of the Ages*) in 1859, where it is used as both an adjective and a noun. Less than a decade later, in 1868, it appears in the writings of Eliphas Lévi, in *Le Grand Arcane* (*The Great Mystery*). Lévi clearly identifies the word *egregore* with the Kabbalistic lore of those beings who were said to be the fathers of the Nephilim. Lévi describes them as beings ignorant of our existence. It may very well be from this source that the use of the term entered modern esoteric lore, as well as the teachings of various French Martinist and Rosicrucian movements and that of the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn.

THE TAROT BY MOUNI SADHU

Mouni Sadhu is the pen name of Dymitr Sudowski (1898–1966), a Polish Theosophist and Martinist. His writings indicate that he was deeply involved in Hermeticism from 1926 to 1933 and was influenced by the writings of Professor Grigorii Ossipovich Mebes (1869–1930). Mebes, a

leading figure of Russian Freemasonry, was also the principal literary inspiration for Estonian-Russian Christian mystic and Hermetic magician Valentin Tomberg, which can clearly be seen in the latter's anonymously published book *Meditations on the Tarot: A Journey into Christian Hermeticism.* In fact, both Sadhu's book *The Tarot* and Valentin's work are nearly identical in philosophical tone save for one critical point: Sadhu asserts the existence of positive egregores, but for Tomberg all egregores are ultimately "demonic." While Sadhu uses the twenty-two cards of the tarot's Major Arcana as the basis for his presentation of Hermetic philosophy (primarily through the eyes of Martinism), he also includes an extensive amount of practical occult advice in each chapter.

Tomberg takes a different tack, providing an exhaustive philosophical view of the tarot as it relates to the major esoteric trends (albeit through the lens of Roman Catholicism), thereby giving it a sort of idealistic high medieval flavor and making it deeply inspirational.

In fact, Tomberg's work has been hailed as the "most beautiful and instructive book of the twentieth century concerning Western esotericism" by the prominent French scholar of Western esotericism Antoine Faivre of Sorbonne University.[1]

In addition, Father Bede Griffiths (1906–1993), the British-born Indian Benedictine monk who later became known as Swami Dayananda, and the internationally renowned Trappist theologian and accomplished author Abbot Thomas Keating endorsed it publically. The most recent edition includes an afterword by Cardinal Hans Urs von Balthasar, "widely considered to be one the greatest Catholic theologians of the twentieth century"—no small feat considering the nature of the topic presented.[2]

For many readers, these books are the only connection they have with the teachings of Martinism as presented in the English language. These two volumes also contain within them a nearly complete presentation of the major themes and ideas of late nineteenth-and early twentieth-century French occultism, which provided the foundation for the British, American, and Russian occult revivals of the same period.

Mouni Sadhu's *The Tarot* lists fifty-two references made to *egregore* and *egregores* in its index. "Egregor: is a collective entity, such as a nation, state, religions and sects and their adherents, and even minor human organizations. The structure of Egregors is similar to that of human beings. They have physical bodies (that is, collectively all the bodies of those who belong to the particular Egregor) and also astral and mental ones, the Egregor being the sum total of all these elements."[3] And later on Sadhu states that "in the colloquial language it can be said, that the magic Chain is composed of both living and dead men, as well as elementals of different types."[4]

He further elaborates how egregores come into being:

> Imagine that an intelligent and well-disposed man, who is able to concentrate, is thinking about a good idea, giving it a certain form. He may then find others, who have the same or similar ideas, and so a circle of men may come into being, who are all thinking along the same lines but in a different form. It is as if every one of them is repeating the drawing of a plan, placing a pencil again and again on the same contours. The thing grows in strength, develops an astrosome and becomes an "Egregor" or collective entity.

> Such an Egregor, like each astrosome, defends, heals and even resuscitates the physical bodies of its members, rousing them to activities and realization of the principal idea incorporated in the Egregor. So, for example, an Egregor of a benevolent society may urge its physical members to still more activities and work, and the attracting of new members. Egregors belonging to organizations and nations which are inimical to one another, are able to fight on the astral plane, while their human beings fight on the physical.
>
> If on the physical plane, enemies destroy the bodies of members of a particular Egregor, their astrosomes [astral bodies] fortify the Egregor on the astral plane, while their human beings fight in the physical world. Recall the persecution of Christians by the Jews and Pagans in the early days of the new religion. The former won the fight, because they were stronger on the astral plane. That is why the Church, at that time, said that the blood of martyrs is the best seed for the new Christians.[5]

Egregores can even establish themselves through various physical locations, thereby assuring their continued survival. The location or object—such as a relic—then becomes a talisman of sorts, directly connected to the Earth and the life experiences of the Adept who established it. This is often a “natural occurrence” rather than the result of rituals, invocations, or those operations limited to creating a single object exclusively for ritual purposes. It has, if you will, an element of “grace” about it.

According to Sadhu, “Very advanced elementars [Adepts] connected with powerful Egregores (usually religious ones) sometimes leave certain centres on the planet, through

which the Egregoric forces may act. Such are the graves of some saints, or genuine advanced yogis, or other spots like Lourdes, the Holy Sepulchre, and some less well known places, often accessible only to initiates."[6]

Sadhu affirms that there exist positive and negative egregores and details some of the psychic actions of Adepts on the astral realm. These actions are designed to enhance an existing egregore or to generate a new one. He also wanders into a discussion of psychic feeding, or "vampirism," of an environment to acquire psychic energy for action on the material realm. Despite the term, Sadhu is clear that this vampirism is an energetic extraction and not of the mythological blood-drinking kind. (This is unfortunately a poor choice of words on his part, because the methods he is talking about are often considered part of a very high esoteric practice.)[7]

Each of these processes is intimately tied to the emotional or astral strength of the Adept. The majority of practitioners, however, will not interact with these energies in astral travels but rather in the physical world through the use of rituals. Sadhu addresses this point succinctly and clearly when he writes, "*The active part of Kabbala is:* 'if we operate Kabbalistically with the symbols and formulas in full consciousness of their meaning, then such an operation MUST be reflected—in a certain measure—on the development of real happenings, on the changes of the astral clichés [forms], and the mental currents.'"[8]

The vitalizing part of the ritual is in vocalization of the various divine names associated with the ten spheres of the Tree of Life. Just as God spoke "the Word" and Creation came into being, so does the Adept recite the divine names and bring into being occult phenomena, beings, or even worlds.

> Now you may be ready to realize the aims of the connection of the TEN NAMES in Theurgy and magic. They are formulas of the separate cycles of the Great Diabatic Process in the Life of the universe. THEIR FULLNESS ENVELOPS EVERYTHING THAT HAS BEEN PERFORMED AND EVERYTHING WHICH WILL BE PERFORMED. It is, so to speak, the full reflection of the subjective understanding by the Collective Man (Universal Being) of the Mystery belonging to the construction of the world, manifested in the signs of his initiatory language.
>
> With every theurgic ceremony and with many magic ones is connected the ritualistic pronunciation of part of the Holy Names, or all of them. This depends upon the kind of Sephiroth taking part in the process of RISING prayers, or conjurations. Therefore exact knowledge of the Names and Sephiroth is indispensable even for the beginning aspirant in Hermeticism and magic. This defines for him the ability of performing Kabbalistic activities in any part of the Diabatic process and GIVES HIM THE ABILITY TO FORTIFY HIS WILL-POWER WITH FORMULAS CONTACTING HIM WITH THE IMMORTAL EGREGORE OF THE GREAT CHAIN FORGED BY THE GUARDS AND MASTERS OF THE WHITE RACE'S KABBALAH.[9]

However, one need not be an official member of an egregore to be affected by it. Sadhu states that it is possible to attract sympathetic souls to an egregore for the purpose of vampirizing them—that is, feeding off their emotional and physical energies. Examples of this can clearly be seen in sporting events as well as political campaigns and various forms of media manipulation. "The operations of Ceremonial Magic do not extend only to two-plane entities, but also to

incarnate ones. It is possible, under favorable conditions of course, to evoke and compel the astrosome [psychic body] of a living man or Egregore of a Chain, having incarnate representatives, and so on, to perform anything."[10]

This power of attraction and even subjugation is not limited to human beings. It extends to everything that lives in the visible and invisible worlds, and egregores are living beings. "Hermetic Tradition is firm in the statement, that EVERYTHING IN THE UNIVERSE IS MUTUALLY CONNECTED AND BOUND TOGETHER OR INTERWOVEN. This is important! If you realize this, many of your troubles, fears and uncertainties will cease to exist."[11] For this reason Sadhu, like Jean Dubuis, encourages students to work with their own "weak Kabbalah" instead of that of someone else or that of a group. Work with your own images, prayers, invocations, and "mantrams" that are derived from your understanding of the Kabbalah so as to limit the influence various egregores may have on you.

VARIOUS INTERPRETATIONS OF DEMONS AND EVIL

The framework for Valentin Tomberg's discussion of egregores falls primarily under the heading of the tarot card known as The Devil. For Tomberg, the fifteenth arcanum is the symbolic embodiment of psychic and magical creations of all egregores. All egregores are then demonic, because they are a creation of man's desires and result in humanity being chained to a false god or ideal.

Here Tomberg directs the reader to a discussion of evil, the nature of demons, how they come into being, and the key point and nature of all spiritual practices, as it is also the danger therein. "Every spiritual exercise tends to lead to the identification of the meditant with the subject of

meditation, i.e., to an act of *intuition,* the fifteenth Arcanum of the Tarot, in so far as it is a spiritual exercise, cannot—and must not—lead to an experience of identification of the meditant with the subject of meditation. One should not arrive at an intuition of evil, since intuition is identification, and identification is *communion.*"[12]

He further states: "One ought not to occupy oneself with evil, other than in keeping a certain distance and certain reserve, if one wishes to avoid the risk of paralyzing the creative elan and a still greater risk—that of furnishing arms to the powers of evil. . . . The world of evil is a chaotic world—at least, as it presents itself to the observer. One ought not to enter this jungle if one does not want to lose one's way there; one should be an observer from the outside."[13]

While it is easy enough to ignore this warning because of the actual or perceived religious bias of the author, similar statements have been made by more iconoclastic individuals. In fact, a passive preoccupation with evil—particularly as expressed by many piety-seeking faithful who have an overwhelming desire to avoid evil and therefore see it existing everywhere—unconsciously consumes them. How does it do so? In the same manner one would eat an elephant: one small bite at a time. We need only examine the lives of those who constantly speak of evil to see the truth in this statement.

In his book of odd and curious anecdotes of the paranormal, *Swimming Where Madmen Drown: Travelers' Tales from Inner Space,* Robert Masters recounts the experience he had with evil while researching a book on witchcraft. Masters, who was a leading figure of the Human Potential movement together with his wife, Jean Houston, writes that in 1960 he arranged to live in Arkansas, in the Ozark Mountains near White River, for one year for the purpose of research and writing. The book he was researching was *Eros and Evil: The Sexual Psychopathology*

of Witchcraft. It addressed the antisexual themes that ran through the medieval witchcraft trials. Masters asserts that as a result of dealing with the cruel and violent nature of the material, "several authors of histories of witchcraft have experienced severe clinical depression."[14]

He then goes on to detail the variety of phenomena that he himself began to experience—phenomena he observed that was identical to what he was reading about in his research. This included infestations of scorpions, centipedes, and tarantulas. As well, dead birds and animals began to show up on the property at which he was residing, along with dead vegetation and trees, sudden flooding from a dry creek bed, and gusts of wind that created "whirlpools of dust and looking like something one would more likely encounter in the desert. Overall, there was a kind of psychic pall that hung over the place, and friends who came to visit me during that time remarked in one way or another about the extremely oppressive feeling of the place. . . . Almost as soon as my book was completed, the whole array of phenomena vanished almost at once. . . . I remained for another eight months or so, [and] they never reappeared."[15]

Masters states that he believes this was a "clear-cut, complex, and powerful example of mind—and possibly soul as well—interacting with nature."[16]

Similar phenomena were noted by Aleister Crowley, pertaining to his research into the Qlippoth, or the demonic forces in the Kabbalah.

Noted author James Wasserman had his own odd experiences with similarly strange phenomena, which he described in his autobiography, *In the Center of the Fire: A Memoir of the Occult 1966–1989.* Wasserman, along with the mysterious "Simon" and Larry Barnes, were instrumental in publishing the Avon Books mass-market

paperback of the *Necronomicon.* The *Necronomicon* is a fictional book of Babylonian magic invented by H. P. Lovecraft, one of the most influential and important writers of fantasy and horror. According to Lovecraftian lore, the *Necronomicon* was written by "the Mad Arab" Abdul Alhazred in Damascus in 730 CE. Translations are said to have made their way through the hands of the great occultists across the ages, including John Dee. The entire base of the *Necronomicon* is its focus on supposedly containing the secrets of an ancient cult who worship the "Old Ones." (These Old Ones are a race of tentacled monsters who are described as being of extraterrestrial origin.) Themes around the *Necronomicon,* and its purported power to drive those who come into contact with it insane, play an important role in several of Lovecraft's most popular stories. It also influenced an entire genre of its own with numerous spin-off stories by other authors as well as inspired imitators. Since its appearance in 1978, the "Simon edition" of the *Necronomicon* has continuously been in print.

> What a loony period the *Necro*[nomicon] production would be. For some reason, nearly everyone who entered our loft shed blood . . . others were constantly cutting themselves in minor accidents. Then one night, I got a frantic call from the typesetters downstairs. Their loft had been overrun by rats bursting through the walls. . . . The Temple in my own loft had a padlock on the outside door so it could be sealed as a private space for my magical work. On July 4th, Jane and I returned from dinner and fireworks. I had an uneasy feeling when we walked through the loft door, itself secured by a heavy-duty police lock. . . . I discovered that my Temple door was open, that the hasp had been broken, and that this appeared to

> have occurred from the inside out. . . . Nothing else in the loft was the slightest bit disturbed.[17]

These examples serve to illustrate why Tomberg asserts that the purpose of The Devil tarot card is not to present the metaphysical dimensions of evil (although he briefly enters that path at the end of the chapter) but rather to illustrate how individuals can lose their freedom to an entity that they or others have generated—an entity that is an artificial being whose creator becomes its slave.

He compares this process to that of the creation of a tulpa in Tibetan Buddhism. “For, in accordance with his experience of them, Eliphas Lévi saw in demons—such as incubi and succubi, the Leonard masters presiding over witch’s Sabbaths, and the demons of the possessed—only creations of human will and imagination, projecting, individually or collectively, their contents into the malleable substances of the ‘astral light’ and thus engendering demons, which are therefore engendered in Europe in exactly the same way as the Tibetan *tulpas*.”[18]

Both Eliphas Lévi and the Tibetan masters are in agreement not only with respect to the subjective and psychological origin of demons but also with respect to their objective existence. Engendered subjectively, they become forces independent of the subjective consciousness that engendered them. They are, in other words, *magical creations,* for magic is the *objectification* of that which takes its origins in the subjective consciousness. Demons that have not arrived at the stage of objectification—that of an existence separate from the psychic life of their parents—have a semi-autonomous existence that is designated in modern psychology by the term *psychological complex.*

Occultist and author Israel Regardie was also Aleister Crowley’s personal secretary and transcriptionist. In several

of Regardie's books he discusses this notion of demons being subjective psychological complexes. This is also a topic of considerable disagreement among Western occultists who insist on a dualistic notion of magical practices being either subjective *or* objective in nature but who fail to grasp the juncture where these distinctions overlap and the essentially parasitic nature of these beings. For Tomberg, an egregore is a collective demon whose prime examples in the twentieth century can be seen in the political movements of National Socialism and Communism.

> The spectre [of communism] has grown. . . . Engendered by the will of the masses, born of despair following the "industrial revolution" in Europe, nourished by the resentment accumulated amongst the masses through generations, armed with a dummy intellectuality which is Hegel's dialectic misconstrued—this spectre has grown and continues to make the rounds in Europe, and in other continents. . . . Today already one third of mankind is impelled to bow down before this god and to obey it in everything. . . . Because for Marxism there is no God or gods—there are only "demons" in the sense of creations of the human will and imagination. This is the fundamental Marxist doctrine of the so-called "ideological superstructure." According to this doctrine it is the economic interest, i.e. the will, which creates, i.e. imagines, ideologies—religious, philosophical, social and political. For Marxism all religions are, therefore, only such "ideological superstructures," i.e. formations due to the human will and imagination. Marxism-Leninism itself is only an ideological superstructure, a product of intellectual imagination, on the basis of the will having

> arranged—or re-arranged—social, political, and cultural things in a certain manner. And this method of production of ideological superstructures on the basis of will is precisely what we understand as the collective generation of a demon or an egregore.[19]

Tomberg asserts—and this may be the reason why he has been so well received by Roman Catholic officials—that there is a clear distinction between the “mystical body of Christ” or the “church triumphant” and the egregore of the church in the political world.

> If there are egregores of initiation orders and religious—and other—communities, they are always negative. The egregore of Catholicism, for example, is its parasitic double (the existence of which it would be futile to deny), which manifests itself as fanaticism, cruelty, “diplomatic wisdom” and excessive pretentions. But insofar as the positive spirits of communities are concerned, they are never egregores, but rather they are entities from the ten hierarchies (ten, because the tenth hierarchy—that of mankind—is included here). It is therefore a human soul, an Angel or an Archangel, who assumes responsibility for the direction of a human community in a positive sense. Thus, it is not at all an egregore but rather St. Francis himself who is the spiritual director of the Franciscan order. It is similarly so for the Church. Its guiding spirit is Jesus Christ.[20]

He goes on to say that “no, there is the Word, and there are egregores before whom humanity bows down; there is revelation of divine truth, and the manifestations of the will of human beings; there is the cult of God, and that of idols

made by man. . . . The Word and idols. . . . operate simultaneously in the history of the human race."[21]

This creates a razor-sharp—and let us emphasize *thin*—distinction between the notion of an egregore as universally evil because it is generated by humanity, and the Christian faith, *by which Tomberg means the Roman Catholic Church,* as ultimately positive because it is generated by God through Christ. This point is theologically sound but is also clearly subjective. It is no different from the Tibetan Buddhist need to "control the narrative" and attempt to keep all discussion of Buddhism within the hermetically sealed and circular framework of Tibetan Buddhism and culture. While there is some truth to it, at the end of the day it cannot hold up to reason and is simply an article of faith.

This view as presented by Tomberg immediately confronts us with an unbridgeable dualism of almost Manichean proportions. The only way for humanity to escape the power of its own creations—that by their nature are evil—is to surrender completely to God. It appears that we are being told to accept the "egregore" that is "not an egregore."

The semiscientific *cum* metaphysical rationale for all egregores being evil is given:

> In order to engender a psychic or "astral" entity, it is necessary that the psychic and mental energy that you produce to this effect coagulates, i.e. *enfolds*. A form is not produced by *radiation;* it is produced only by coagulation or *enfoldment*. Now, good only radiates; it does not at all enfold. It is always evil which does this.
>
> You cannot engender . . . an "egregore of universal love" because the quality of will and imagination required to this end is not held

> together as a formation centered in itself, but forms an alliance—one of “radiating movement”—with the activity of the world of spiritual hierarchies. The psychic and mental energy of love would never give rise to the formation of an individual psychic or “astral” entity; it would immediately and wholly put itself at the disposal of the celestial hierarchies, saints, and God. Therefore, although one can certainly engender demons, one cannot engender artificial Angels.[22]

However, Tomberg does give some practical and insightful advice on how to avoid creating or strengthening negative forces.

> Let us be silent. . . . To be silent is more than to keep things secret; it is more even than to guard oneself from profaning the holy things to which a respectful silence is owed. To be silent is, above all, *the great magical commandment of not engendering demons* through our arbitrary will and imagination. . . .
>
> Let us resign ourselves, therefore, to the Great Work of contributing constructively to tradition—the spiritual, Christian, Hermetic, scientific tradition. Let us thoroughly immerse ourselves in it, let us study it, let us practice it, lastly, let us cultivate it, i.e., let us work not in order to overthrow but in order to build. Let us range ourselves amongst the builders of the “great cathedral” of mankind’s spiritual tradition—and let us try to contribute to it. May the Holy Scriptures be holy for us; may the Sacraments be sacraments for us; may the hierarchy of spiritual authority be the hierarchy of authority for us; and may the “perennial philosophy”—and also truly

> scientific science—of the past and present have friends in us and, should it be the case, respectful collaborators! This is what the commandment to be silent entails—the commandment of not engendering demons.[23]

Like Sadhu, Tomberg notes that physical locations can be the anchor points of spiritual force. However, he makes a distinction, based on theological assumptions, between talismans and the sacraments, stating that holy sites, relics, and sacraments are not talismans (storage containers for energy) but rather gateways through which an inexhaustible energy flows.

DISINFORMATION—THE DEVIL MADE ME DO IT

Despite his claims of not discussing the metaphysics of evil, Tomberg does take a slight detour down the road of attempting to explain the role of evil in the world. He speaks of the “hierarchies of the Left,” those beings often referred to as the Qlippoth in Kabbalah, whom we have mentioned before. These demonic beings are the counterpart of the hierarchy of angels. Tomberg places them in a scriptural context, such as in Job, wherein the purpose of the demon is to test the spirituality of man. Here, he says, the demon will only leave once it is convinced of an individual’s holiness. It acts, as it were, as “the devil’s advocate” in the trial of the soul before God, for one is only holy once “good and evil agree upon it.”

The other role is that of a demon who is controlled and put into the service of good. This is similar to the story of King Solomon controlling demons to build the temple, or the notion within Tibetan Buddhism of Padmasambhava binding

demons to defend the dharma. The most interesting example given by Tomberg, however, concerns demonic influence as simply intent upon distraction. “There are also entities from the hierarchies of the left accused of making use of *ridicule*—farce—as a means of demonstrating their prosecuting thesis. An entity belonging to this latter category is known in the western world. This is Mephistopheles, whose portrait Goethe painted with astonishing exactness. . . . The ridicule which Mephistopheles makes use of has a serious foundation. It is primarily human pretension and snobbery that turns into ridicule. Here is an example of this: . . .”[24]

At this point Tomberg tells the story of Hugh Clayton Randall-Stevens, describing him as a retired journalist who was financially secure, spiritually indifferent, and living a life of leisure with his wife. Then in February 1925 he suddenly started getting “messages” from an entity who claimed to be the Egyptian god Osiris. Osiris revealed to the journalist all of the ancient wisdom of Egypt that archaeologists had yet to discover—but someday would. Soon Randall-Stevens began to draw images, having never drawn before. The style was simplistic and yet pompous, and it detailed the struggle between good and evil, with the obligatory reference to Atlantis. Several books of this channeled material were published by Rider of London, and, in time, it was articulated that the unsuspecting channeler of ancient wisdom was also the reincarnation of Pharaoh Akhenaton.

Of course Tomberg insisted this is not Osiris but the spirit of Mephistopheles, with “the whole revelation . . . only a farce made by him for the . . . credulous? No—for spiritual snobs.” The books even contain a note from the author stating that the reason they are being read is not because of their wisdom—for little is there—but because of how the material is communicated: it is done so in “an extraordinary way.” It is the fantastic that people are after, not the truth.[25]

Spiritual snobbery is a fine phrase for it, and one that is echoed in a different manner by Joscelyn Godwin in his book *Atlantis and the Cycles of Time: Prophecies, Traditions, and Occult Revelations,* wherein he spends a fair amount of time discussing Randall-Stevens. “The warning that our civilization is heading for imminent doom is a favorite refrain of Atlantologists. To a certain cast of mind, often shared by Superior Intelligences, it always seems that the present day is on the brink of catastrophe, because everyone is so wicked (except of course the writer and his or her readers).”[26]

If we pause for a moment we find something a little deeper here. It is not just one person who is being distracted from the search for inner spiritual awakening or Truth. No, it is everyone who reads or comes into contact with a book of such banalities. We also see that evil does not need to control everyone, it just needs to influence the *right* one, and through this influence not even control people—simply keep them distracted. These themes are addressed by renowned British philosopher and author Colin Wilson in *The Mind Parasites* and by British author of the occult Gary Lachman in *A Secret History of Consciousness*. However, with the exception of Lachman’s book, which is largely a restating of Wilson’s premise presented in a historical context, few writers on the paranormal have approached this critical point: evil does not need to control everyone, it just needs to keep as many people as possible distracted from progressing on the path. This distraction comes in various forms by way of the media, personal electronic devices, video games, movies, television, music, and sports. Mindless political memes are among the most popular manifestations at the moment. This also means that the creators and purveyors of these media and the products produced for them are prime candidates for demonic

obsession and possession. To affect one of *them* is to reach millions *through* them.

TELEPATHY AND MIND CONTROL THROUGH THE MEDIA

It should come as no surprise that during the 1930s, when mass broadcast media was still in its relative infancy, both the BBC and NBC radio networks undertook a series of mass on-air telepathy tests. NBC did these in cooperation with Zenith Radio Corporation, and, as part of them, the original “Zener Cards” (the most common tool used in extrasensory testing) were distributed to the public. Zener cards are a deck of twenty-five cards consisting of five symbols: a circle, cross, wavy lines, square, and five-pointed star. They were created by psychologist Karl Zener (1903–1964) in the 1930s for experiments in psychic research. This work was done in conjunction with J. B Rhine. Packs were sent to local Zenith radio sales-and-repair shops for promotional purposes and were also available for purchase in five-and-dime stores. These cards were so popular that they were unavailable two weeks after their initial issue and had to be reprinted.

Specific individuals working in the field of telepathic research included American botanist and the founder of parapsychology, J. B. Rhine (1895–1980). He was the founder of the Rhine Research Center, located on the campus of Duke University, Durham, North Carolina. The Rhine Research Center is an independent center for the study of parapsychology. It is the successor organization to the Parapsychology Laboratory at Duke University and is possibly the oldest facility of its kind. It was founded by Rhine when he retired from Duke University in 1965; it was first called the “Foundation for Research on the Nature of

Man and the Institute for Parapsychology." Unlike the Parapsychology Laboratory, the Rhine Research Center is not affiliated with Duke University. In *The Reach of the Mind,* Rhine attests to the telepathic experiments that were conducted by the Zenith Corporation on several occasions in the 1920s and 1930s.

> The nineteen-twenties, however, saw a marked rise of interest in telepathy. It was paralleled by a similar increase of public interest in spiritualism and was doubtless affected by it. The tremendous loss of life and the widespread bereavement which took place during the First World War, together with the ensuing uncertainties and shifting values, undoubtedly had the effect of turning men's thoughts towards the possibility of forces beyond the knowledge of science. Countless men and women felt the need of something more than purely physical explanations of life and death. A mass telepathy experiment was conducted by radio over the Zenith Broadcasting Station in Chicago in 1923, and a little later the British Broadcasting Corporation conducted another. Later still, the *Scientific American* magazine carried out a self-testing program in telepathy, and there were numerous other manifestations of popular interest.[27]

In a booklet, *What Well Known Scientists Say about Telepathy,* published in March 1938, E. F. McDonald Jr., president of the Zenith Radio Corporation, made the following statement.

> This booklet is intended as a preliminary report from the Zenith Foundation to its partners in this

> great adventure of exploration. Necessarily incomplete, it nevertheless sets down in permanent form some of the best and most scientific contemporary thought on this subject. Even more important than its contributions to the scientific fund of information on the subject of mental phenomena is the fact that this radio series has lifted the entire subject out of the dungeon of prejudice into the white light of serious discussion by millions of people. I want to thank the many scientists, educators, and other speakers who appeared on the Zenith programs, for permission to reprint their interviews. I want to express my appreciation to the hundreds of thousands who participated in the Zenith telepathy tests and to the many thousands of listeners who sent in their experiences.[28]

Preliminary conclusions of the experiments, which lasted for thirty weeks, were compiled and listed in the booklet. They stated:

- Telepathy functions best when strong emotions are involved.
- Telepathic ability varies in individuals, as well as at certain times.
- Physical distance has no effect on telepathic communication.
- Telepathic communication is most often experienced between people with blood or love relationships.
- Time is not a factor in expressing or experiencing telepathy.
- Age is not a factor in expressing or experiencing telepathy.

Statistical results were based on a quarter of a million responses with preliminary results showing that the odds of some of the test results being left to chance were 1 in 10,000,000,000,000,000,000. The report went on to state: “Of greater importance than cold statistics, however, is the repeated testimony of Zenith Foundation programs of the successful men and women who attributed their success to the conscious or unconscious use of little known mental powers. . . . We do not have to wait until science can explain these powers, but we can use them now in our daily lives merely by heeding the premonitions and impulses which add to success and happiness.”[29]

Dr. Rhine’s books, including *New Frontiers of the Mind* and others, were listed on the instruction card along with participating radio stations, date, and time. His work is intentionally quoted here because his research has made him one of, if not the only, household name for psychic research. In addition, his research was done well over half a century ago. This point is brought up to demonstrate that, despite extensive evidence of psychic phenomena and ability, the general public believes in it not because of “science” or statistical reports, but because of personal experience.

Yet in spite of the massive amount of research since these public experiments were done more than half a century ago, the scientific community as a whole fails to demonstrate any significant interest in parapsychology or even to show any confidence in the research in which its own members engage. These observations ought to demonstrate that the witnessing of or participation in psychic phenomena, at least as of now, is a predominantly intimate and personal experience, and any scientist involved in psychic research, despite Dr. Rhine’s optimistic views, still places their professional reputation and career in danger.

AMBELAIN AND MARTINISM

Robert Ambelain (1907–1997) was a French essayist and author of forty-two books, some of them written under the pseudonym Aurifer. He was a leading member of many Martinist bodies and involved with esoteric Freemasonry, serving as the grand master of Memphis-Mizraim from 1960 until 1985, and ordained a bishop in the Gnostic Universal Church in 1946. Even during the Nazi occupation of France from 1940 until 1945 he was a ceaseless organizer of esoteric movements in France and abroad. He wrote about all areas of esoteric history, theory, and practice.

Ambelain's many associations made him directly familiar with the formation, maintenance, and dissolution of egregores. His authority on the matter made him widely cited by both Sadhu and Tomberg in their works. The following is from his book *Practical Kabbalah,* translated by Piers A. Vaughan for private circulation.

> We give the name Egregore to a Force generated by a powerful spiritual current and later fed at regular intervals, conforming to a rhythm in harmony with the Universal Life of the Cosmos, or to a meeting of Entities united by a common characteristic.
>
> In the Invisible, outside of the physical perception of Man, there exist artificial beings, generated by devotion, enthusiasm or fanaticism, which we call egregores. These are the hearts of the great spiritual currents, good or evil. The Mystical Church, Celestial Jerusalem, the Body of Christ, and all such titles, are the qualifications which give communion to the egregore of Catholicism. Freemasonry, Protestantism, Islam,

> and Buddhism have egregores. Great political ideologies have them too.
>
> Psychically integrated through ritual initiation or through an intellectual adherence to these currents, *the affiliate becomes one of its constitutive cells. He augments the power of the egregore through the qualities or faults which he possesses, and in exchange, the egregore isolates him from the external forces of the physical world, and with the collective force it had previously stored, greatly enhances the feeble means of activity of the man who joins with it.* [emphasis added] Instinctively, popular language gives the name of "circle" to an egregore, thus intuitively expressing the idea of a circuit. Between the constitutive cell and the egregore—that is to say, between the affiliate and the group—a sort of inner psychic circulation is thereby established.
>
> *This explains why opponents of such a concept, on studying the origin, nature and life of this concept, often end by joining with it or at least by espousing a part of the theories, even without their knowledge. They are connected to a current, which, as it is more powerful than those who are primitively linked to it, carries them unknowingly away from the road that they imagined they were following.* [emphasis added] If they were free of any affiliation, this action would only be the more brutal and strong.[30]

According to Ambelain, the formation of an egregore is described in the works of the *Spiritual Exercises of Ignatius of Loyola,* Ignatius being the founder of the Jesuits. It should also be underscored that egregores are vitalized through rituals, thus only human associations can form them. The

corollary is that the destruction of an egregore rapidly occurs with “the death by fire of its living members” and the destruction of its ritual and paraphernalia. Without these material supports and the emotional-psychic energy they provide, the astral egregore will wither and die. Incineration is required so as not to shed blood, the medium of occult vitality (“the life is in the blood”), particularly if its release is ritualistic.

However, because one can experience a profound backlash upon leaving by choice or through excommunication, Ambelain suggests that one temporarily seek shelter in “an equivalent but opposite power.” Just as physical associations exist because of membership, so egregores exist because of the entities or beings that they attract on the astral plane. The power to attract, compel, and maintain these entities is a direct result of the rituals and sacrifices performed for them by their earthly adherents. Again, all egregores exist on three levels: material, astral, and celestial.

For this reason any interruption in the performance of the ritual will have an equally disruptive effect on the vitality of the egregore. Thus rituals, after a certain period of time, cannot be modified without weakening the egregore, making secrecy all the more critical. Rituals composed of “secret names, words, and formulae . . . to awaken and establish the egregore” are also directed around specific astrological events to coordinate with celestial and cosmic cycles. It is not by accident that equinox and solstice rituals play such an important part in many organizations. However, in larger movements wherein the mass of the “faithful” provide a certain amount of vital power, this power is passive. The active quality and quantity of energy comes from those most capable and dedicated in their practice. It is for this reason that, regardless of all claims to the contrary, there can be no egalitarianism in an occult

movement—or in any spiritual movement for that matter, as the leadership or “inner circle” will be in charge of maintaining and directing the egregore.

Patrick Zalewski, the well-known Adept we mentioned earlier, has described the formation, growth, and even mutation of an egregore by using the metaphor of a honeycomb. In a private correspondence with the present author, he writes:

> Think of a ritual or belief where the overall boundaries encompass core components and support mechanisms are visualized as the interior of a beehive or honeycomb with its numerous cell divisions. While a number of cell divisions can occur or even change, as long as they maintain the core principles then the same egregore is simply being tweaked. However, there is a tipping point, and once that is reached then something will change into something else. An example of this in the Golden Dawn system is the different letters on the Enochian Tablets. The Tablets work even with the various letter changes. You can also apply this paradigm to general ritual. It is a case of measuring comparative difference—when they are minor it does not matter and when they are major, well, then it does![31]

On a psychic level, egregores are anthropomorphized images of the concept at hand. For instance, peace, war, love, wealth, and nation are all just ideas that are created through visualization and vitalized through regular ritualized emotion, and finally made concrete through a specialized sign or symbol. These signs or symbols are no different from the logo of a company, brand, or product, which are themselves lesser or greater egregores. Just as a logo acts

as a form of legal protection for the company and its employees who work together for a common cause, so too does the *sigillum* (magical sign or seal) of an egregore act as an identifying, guiding, and protecting force for its members.

Yet this relationship does not last forever. Egregores that have existed for a period of time will become independent and no longer obey their earthly masters. An egregore may easily turn into “a fierce tyrant” and cause its associated organization or movement to deviate from its original purpose. Thus, to conquer an egregore one must first evoke it. This may explain why some esoteric groups have a built-in life span or “expiration date” (as with the Rosicrucian cycle of the “opening” and “closing” of the Vault). The egregore may be an essential mechanism or tool, but for the movement to maintain control over its own egregore and continuity of mission, it must go through periods of activity and rest as do human beings.

In summary, the formation of an egregore is identical to all magical operations where an effect in the material world is desired. In the process, incense, signs and symbols, the visualization of concrete images, the formation of “magical chains,” and a mental current fortified with emotional desire are ritually enacted on a regular basis. While the number of members assures a certain amount of physical life for an egregore, it is the regular and proficient performance of its rituals, combined with the spiritual union of its members, that give it strength. Thus secrecy must be maintained as far as is possible, as well as the generating of goodwill, approval, and even passive support for the egregore from those who know about it but are not members of the associated group.

This necessity of general goodwill, or at least neutrality toward an egregore, is understood most clearly when we see the actions of egregores upon each other on the astral

plane. This action is most powerful between countries, religions, political parties, or any area where there is direct competition. French mystic Paul Sedir describes this combat between egregores. The following, from Sedir's book *Initiations,* is a conversation between the doctor, a seeker of occult knowledge, and Andreas, who holds that knowledge. Andreas speaks first.

> "Great historic catastrophes, as you now must have seen, have not had less futile causes. One must therefore pay attention to them if one is to intervene usefully in any way. We French have a greater right and duty than anybody to love our country in every way. If, doctor, you have any awareness of the Invisible realm you must have seen how much light and beauty has come to Europe through France in spite of the follies of some of its sons and the misdemeanors of its princes. . . . Ingratitude is not the prerogative only of men. The beings that the grandiloquent Eliphas Lévi called 'egregores' also possess this fault. The egregores of other nations have no concern for our own country. On the contrary, they'd very much like to dominate or even destroy it and enrich themselves from the spoils. And the Adversary, who's on the watch for every chance of a quarrel, helps as much as He can. In the three persons about whom we were talking He found a marvelous field of opportunity. All three had neither country nor religion. Their god was just themselves, and the invisible forces sought to profit from the egotistic passions of these three, who held in their hands the most powerful levers of social life, to bring down our country."
>
> "I am beginning to understand," I said, "but if I'm not being indiscreet, are you thinking of intervening

in this coalition?”

“Certainly doctor. Isn’t it my duty if Providence has given me the means?”[32]

POLITICS AND THE OCCULT

This theme of egregores’ role in politics is echoed in *Politics and the Occult: The Left, the Right, and the Radically Unseen* by Gary Lachman. As Lachman points out in his brief foray into the world of egregores, even if a spiritual force is not at work there is a peculiar utilization of group consciousness that can take place for good or for ill. In this respect Lachman quotes the Polish philosopher, linguist, and poet Jean Gebser and his “magical structure of consciousness,” made up of an interconnectedness of all living beings and specific expressions of group consciousness. Lachman points out that this collective “shadow,” or “egregore,” can express itself in fiction, as the English novelist, poet, playwright, and politician Edward Bulwer-Lytton (1803–1873) demonstrated in his occult novel *Zanoni,* as well as in real life. Lachman quotes Morris Berman, the American historian and social critic best known for his book *The Reenchantment of the World:* “An entire culture can eventually undergo very serious changes as the result of slow accumulation of enough psychic and somatic changes on an invisible level.”[33]

This peculiar group force of mind is something that has been consciously created and cultivated by a variety of associations. While religious and political associations are easiest to identify—and esoteric and occult movements make the most vocal claims to the existence and power of their egregores—in the media-dominated world we also see marketing and branding of celebrities and multigenerational television and movie franchises as having their own

egregores. These may even be composed of smaller units, but they all feed into the larger ideal or collective entity.

The human potential movement of the 1960s and 1970s, the movement that would morph into the New Age movement, had among its various proponents those who actively sought to create thoughtforms and even “ensouled” egregores as part of its mission. Of course, this was all to be done to bring about a more enlightened age and leadership —but “more enlightened” according to *whom*?

4

Pop Culture and the Creation of Egregores

JEAN DUBUIS, UFOS, FENG SHUI, AND SLENDERMAN

In the 1990s Jean Dubuis (1919–2010), founder of the French alchemical association known as the Philosophers of Nature (PON), would often lecture about the issue of egregores. For Dubuis, far too often the egregore, or group mind or soul, was a trap rather than a channel toward liberation. Personal agendas hidden inside the desired manifestations utilized the emotional energy of the group to bring to pass what one person could not—all without the knowledge or consent of the group. This was not limited to esoteric or magical circles but included politics, business, the military, and religious organizations. For this reason Dubuis advocated a solitary path wherein the external influences could be minimized until they could be effectively managed and made more or less inconsequential.

During this same time period Dubuis often used the example of a group working in Switzerland whose obsession was with unidentified flying objects (UFOs), saying that this was all an effort to create a thoughtform that would materialize so that group leaders could take on the role of “interplanetary mediators” and thereby gain some significant level of political control that, in his words, “would

be worse than Hitler.” Having lived through the Nazi occupation of France in the years 1940 to 1945, this was no empty statement or hyperbole by Dubuis. To this end he would quote his fellow Frenchman, scientist, Hermeticist, venture capitalist, and author of several bestselling books on UFOs, Jacques Vallée.

Vallée is famous for being the inspiration and technical force behind the Steven Spielberg movie *Close Encounters of the Third Kind* and is renowned for his scientific investigation of UFO phenomena. Having started his research looking for extraterrestrial sources of UFOs he would ultimately come to the conclusion that they were interdimensional beings. His third book, *Passport to Magonia: From Folklore to Flying Saucers,* detailed this research.

He also advocated that UFO phenomena was multifaceted, including manipulation by government and nongovernment entities of the sightings—be they real, false, or fabricated—intended to generate belief in the benevolent “space brothers,” as some cults have called them. As with the “Unknown Superiors,” those illuminated beings who guide humanity (referenced in chapter 2), these space brothers always seemed to speak through “chosen representatives” who would foretell of a certain doom that would befall humanity, resulting in mass death save for the “elect.”

This message did not resonate well with Vallée. Maybe the space brothers and their self-appointed representatives were not so benevolent after all.

In addition to expressing the views of Vallée, Dubuis also stated that he had been contacted by a magical group in the Channel Islands who invited him to work with them in their efforts to destroy or at least weaken the egregore of Islam. This was five years before the September 11 terrorist

attacks in New York City and the launching of the War on Terror. Dubuis declined the offer, stating that he had other work to focus on.

What does this have to do with Slenderman, the fictional character who was said to abduct children and was briefly portrayed as a new source of horror in the world? By using the magical method of the egregore, “what I cannot do alone, many others can do for me,” and harnessing the psycho-sexual-emotional energy of millions of preadolescent and adolescent youths, a veritable buffet of psychic energy was made available for the taking.

The impressionable quality of children and young people to affect collective outcomes or even predict them is expanded upon by Dr. Baolin Wu in his work (with Jessica Eckstein) *Lighting the Eye of the Dragon: Inner Secrets of Taoist Feng Shui.*

> In 1966, shortly before the beginning of the Cultural Revolution, Dr. Wu’s teacher, Master Du, took him aside to tell him that China was soon going to be in the throes of revolution. Dr. Wu asked his teacher how could he know such a thing. His response was, “It’s part of the I Ching. You can predict things.” Master Du asked his student what he had seen that morning on his way to school. The young Dr. Wu said there had been a group of children playing with a top, a common toy on the streets of Beijing, whipping it with a string to keep it spinning. Master Du explained that the way they whipped the top was like the way of whipping people, the capturing of people; this was a sign. It is the will of heaven to warn us ahead of time about everything that will happen, whether we realize it or not. The study of Feng Shui and of the I Ching is an attempt to recognize these messages ahead of time. . . .

> Respecting children as representatives of our collective unconscious is a valuable lesson to learn. . . . Whatever a child plays at or with will be what the nation builds up or develops.[1]

The fundamental premise of psychotherapy, psychospiritual practices, hypnosis, and a legion of government-funded mind-control experiments is that what we are exposed to often enough we become sympathetic toward. What we focus on, we become. Thus if we wish to live in a world of peace, health, and general well-being, it is there our children must place their attention, and not in a world of psychic horror and mass violence—or the usual fare from the entertainment and news industries.

REVOLT AGAINST THE MODERN WORLD BY JULIUS EVOLA

Revolt Against the Modern World is Julius Evola's magnum opus wherein he details his views about the spiritual state of the world in relation to traditionalist philosophy. Traditionalism, as its name implies, views contemporary ideals as superficial at best, and more often as false and counter to the genuine spiritual ideal that classical societies maintained. In the current state of human affairs, with its blatant materialism, shallowness, and even false schools of initiation, only individuals are seen as capable of realizing these traditional spiritual ideals and the transformative power they contain.

> The possibilities still available in the last times concern only a minority and may be distinguished as follows. . . . There are still individuals who are rooted in terra firma. Generally speaking, they are

> unknown people who shun the spotlight of modern popularity and culture. They live on spiritual heights; they do not belong to this world. Though they are scattered over the earth and often ignorant of each other's existence, they are united by an invisible bond and form an unbreakable chain in the traditional spirit. This nucleus does not act: it only exercises the function to which the symbolism of the "perennial fire" corresponds. By virtue of these people, Tradition is present despite all; the flame burns invisibly and something still connects the world to the superworld. They are those who are awake, whom in Greek are called the *egregoroi* (egregores).[2]

Here we see Evola using the term *egregoroi* to indicate a spiritual elite, just as we often hear the term *illuminati* tossed around to designate some such body. The illuminati, however, do not act in the world, they only sustain the spiritual tradition so that it will not be lost to the tides of ignorance that sweep through this, the Kali Yuga.[2] Interestingly, this idiosyncratic notion of an occult group of "Watchers" is an idea that has appeared frequently in some of the most popular television shows of the past twenty years—even using the very name "Watchers."

As Evola states:

> There are an increasing number of individuals who experience a confused and yet real need for liberation, though they do not know in the name of what. To orient these people, and shield them from the spiritual dangers of the actual world, to lead them to the truth and sharpen their will to join the ranks of the first type of people is what can still be done. And yet this too affects only a minority, and

> we should not delude ourselves that in this way there will be sizeable changes in the overall destinies of the multitudes. In any event, this is the only justification for tangible action that can be carried out by men of Tradition living in the modern world, a milieu with which they have no connection.
>
> In order for the above-mentioned guiding action to be successful it is necessary to have “watchers” at hand who bear witness to the values of Tradition in ever more uncompromising and firm ways, as the anti-traditional forces grow in strength. . . . And let us ONLY be concerned about one thing: to keep standing amid a world of ruins. Even though today an efficacious, general, and realizing action stands almost no chance at all, the ranks that I mentioned before can still set up inner defenses. . . .
>
> Finally, we must consider a third possibility. To some the path of acceleration may be the most suitable approach to a solution, considering that given certain conditions, many reactions are the equivalent of those cramps that only prolong agony and by delaying the ends also delay the advent of the new principle. When the contacts are cut off and there is no longer any sound base, the last resort is the heroic capacity. Thus, it would be expedient to take on, together with a special inner attitude, the most destructive process of the modern era in order to use them for liberation; this would be like turning a poison against oneself or like “riding a tiger.”[3]

Here Evola opines that the search for spiritual illumination is for the self-selecting few, not for the many, and we should not fool ourselves into thinking otherwise. In fact, not only is traditional and authentic spirituality

dismissed by the masses, but there are also antitraditional forces or counter-initiatic forces at play. Thus with all that is allied against the genuine guardians of the traditions, and seekers of inner light, we each must guard ourselves against the onslaught and work to bring about the end of “the modern era” so as to terminate its suffering and bring about genuine liberation.

For Evola the most pernicious sign of Western decadence was “unrealism,” wherein individuals are unaware of “spirituality as a reality.” This is then extended to include experiencing the self solely in terms of thoughts and ideas, or as a psychological construct. These thoughts “eventually create a world of mirages, phantasms, and idols that replace spirituality; this is the humanistic myth of culture. . . . Together with abstract thoughts, there arises the romantic world of the ‘soul.’ [For what] emerges are ‘sentimentalism and faith, of individualistic and humanistic pathos, of sensualism and superfluous heroism, of humility and revolt.’”[4]

The natural political offspring of passing emotions based on an illusory self-construct is the desire to establish “a new universal civilization” wherein there is no real “I” and humanity is freed from the idea of spirituality. We see this in those demons of Kabbalah known as the Contending Heads, which for Evola are expressed through the evil conjoined twins of rampant consumerism and Communism.

Thus to survive the catastrophe of modern living one must abandon its superficial values and commit oneself fully to one’s own awakening—while helping those who both desire it and those who can be guided into the ranks of the self-selecting spiritual elite. Evola also hints at the existence of psychic beings, or “nonhuman elements,” behind these two worldviews and posits that it may be possible with a heroic determination to use them to “foster experiences of a higher life and higher freedoms.”

For Evola there are only two paths—one forward as part of the elite, to “die trying,” and the other to “die with the dissolution of the modern world.” The ability to use the very forces of ignorance against itself is a peculiar aspect of the time in which we are said to live; “although the Kali Yuga is an age of great destructions, those who live during it and manage to remain standing may achieve fruits that were not easily achieved by men living in other ages.”[5]

MIND GAMES BY ROBERT MASTERS AND JEAN HOUSTON

The concept of the thoughtform has played a key role in the writings of Jean Houston and her husband, Robert Masters, whom we have discussed earlier. Masters’s encounter with the dark forces of nature as he encountered them while researching *Eros and Evil* are but one example. The idea of collective consciousness, Tibetan tulpas, and the materialization of thoughtforms is central to his work *Swimming Where Madmen Drown*. At the center of the Consciousness-Expansion Movement of the 1960s and 1970s, the works of John Lilly (psychedelic research) and Milton Erickson (neurolinguistic programming) played a formative role in the methods used in the writing of *Mind Games: The Guide to Inner Space*. This was a book intentionally designed as a hypnotic device to be read aloud to group members. Reading the book is, in itself, a guided meditation or magical act.

Masters and Houston write, “We are beginning to go now into trance together. We are going to experience deepening together, finally, each of us will contribute to the pool of consciousness out of which the Group Spirit *will draw its substance and arise to exist once again.* [emphasis added] And now we will breathe rhythmically together, gradually

bringing our breathing together, until we are all exhaling and inhaling in perfect unison [NLP method of entrainment], and we will continue to do that for a while. . . . As we breathe we are creating our unity of consciousness."[6]

This is followed by a series of instructions repeated several times to deepen the message and ensure compliance. "And we now are becoming, and all of us are becoming, all of us becoming one mind. One mind, one mind, one mind, one mind, one mind, one mind. One trance, one trance, one trance, one trance, one trance, one trance, one ever-deepening trance."[7]

Then, after several minutes, the actual goal of the group activity is revealed. Notice that materialization of the idea is critical to this practice. This is not an abstraction but rather a magical ritual to bring something into materialization by the group under the direction of its leader-reader.

> You will be aware of that emergence, and of the Group Spirit's location in space, there at the center. And you will concentrate on that space, focus intensely and remain focused on that space, and understand now we can and must *materialize* the Group Spirit, endowing that entity with a sufficiently material being that it can appear to us all. And more, if we are successful enough, we will be able to apprehend the Group Spirit with any one of our senses—be able to see it, and hear it, and we even could touch it, were it not necessary to take certain precautions, which will be taken. But we *can* materialize this entity, by concentrating on the center and vividly imagining, powerfully imagining, the flow of substance, of material, from you and into that center, where the pool has been created by us.

> The image of matter, the image of substance, flowing from us to the center, and the image will materialize as the substance of the Group Mind.[8]

At the end the energy is dispersed. “We will let go of this Group Spirit to which we have given birth and nourishment and substance. We will let go of it, and when we do let go, then it will in no sense exist anymore as an entity with an independent existence of its own. It will only exist as a memory, and we will remember what we have learned by, temporarily, calling up something that did seem to exist apart from us, and in a way that made it unlike any other existence within our experience.”[9]

Detailed directions are then given to detach the participants from the collective image while still retaining any insight, information, or ideas that may have arisen during the experiment. The image is dissolved, and the individual nature of each of the participants is affirmed, along with their detachment from the group mind.

The book *Mind Games* and its ideas were significant enough that John Lennon, an icon of the counterculture movement, wrote a song of the same name about it, which was released as a single.

5

The Lovecraft Circle

HOWARD PHILLIPS LOVECRAFT AND THE NECRONOMICON

H. P. Lovecraft (1890–1937) can be counted among America's most important authors of the twentieth century, if not of all time. His literary output was considerable. Along with it he penned an estimated one hundred thousand letters to friends and acquaintances—particularly those who formed "the Lovecraft Circle" of pulp horror and adventure writers of the period. In his voluminous correspondence he often generously encouraged aspiring authors as well as those who had experienced greater fame and commercial success than himself. As a result, despite having virtually no notoriety during his lifetime, Lovecraft's life is considered to be one of the most well-documented ever, with an estimated twenty thousand items written by him believed to be in existence today.

Born in Providence, Rhode Island, on August 20, 1890, Lovecraft primarily based his stories there, as well as in neighboring Massachusetts. Lovecraft was raised by his mother, her two sisters, and her father. Sickly as a child, he did not attend school until the age of eight, and then only for one year. He read widely growing up and is described as being a prodigy—particularly in poetry. His interest in mythology as well as science was encouraged. By the age of

nine he had produced several publications and eventually returned to public high school, although it appears he did not graduate, for reasons that are uncertain.

It was also during his childhood that Lovecraft would have the most formative experiences of his life, dominating and even directing the course it would take, at least in a literary sense. Nightmares, terrors, and various forms of as of yet undiagnosed sleep paralysis disorders appear to have plagued him, and it is from these early experiences that many of the characters we see later in his horror stories were drawn.

Lovecraft was a creature of the night, rarely going out before dark. After finishing high school he lived at home with his mother, spending his time writing poetry and eventually publishing his first story—“The Alchemist”—in 1916. In 1917, with America’s entry into World War I, he attempted to join the Rhode Island National Guard but, unsurprisingly, failed the physical.

H. P. Lovecraft is best known for the *Cthulhu Mythos,* works that are characterized by a primary theme of the powerlessness of humanity and its relative insignificance in the cosmos. *Cthulhu Mythos* was written during the last ten years of his life—a period in which he was also engaged as a ghostwriter—in what would prove to be his most productive time.

Unfortunately, Lovecraft would only achieve renown after his death. His failure to flourish as a writer during his lifetime can be directly connected to his excessive sensitivity. While this is what allowed him to be creative, it’s also what prevented him from pressing forward when encountering difficulties. He frequently collapsed into self-pity and slipped into a discouraged frame of mind. On top of this, his poor health—engendered by poverty and his nocturnal living habits—coupled with what was his social

isolation (despite his massive correspondence) all hindered his way.

However, whatever the source of his inspiration: childhood traumas, neurotic ideations, nightmares—or preternatural intelligences, as some occultists would have us believe—Lovecraft himself stated in a letter to the editor of *Weird Tales:*

Now all of my tales are based on the fundamental premise that common human laws and interests and emotions have no validity or significance in the vast cosmos-at-large. To me there is nothing but puerility in a tale in which the human form—and the local human passions and conditions and standards—are depicted as native to other worlds or universes. To achieve the essence of a real externality, whether of time or space or dimensions, one must forget that such things as organic life, good and evil, love and hate, and all such local attributes of a negligible and temporary race called mankind, have any existence at all. Only human scenes and characters must have human qualities. These must be handled with unsparing realism (not catch-penny romanticism) but when we cross the line to the boundless and hideous unknown—the shadow-haunted Outside—we must remember to leave our humanity and terrestrial-ism at the threshold.[1]

The overarching theme in Lovecraft's work can be summed up in the following points.

- The search for knowledge is ultimately self-destructive for those who peek behind the curtain of reality.
- We cannot escape the past, even the past of our ancestors.
- We are not in control of our destiny—larger forces prevail.

- The modern age is decadent and self-destructive and under threat from primitive and barbaric forces, both within and without.
- Ancient evil persists into the modern world in inconceivable ways and, once realized, leads to insanity and death.

Lovecraft's impact has been widespread and lasting. He has been a seminal influence on some of the greatest horror writers of the twentieth century. The mythos he created—or as some would tell us, "unconsciously revealed"—appears in television shows, movies, music, video, board and card games, and even occult practices. The powerful and overwhelming appeal of this man and his nightmares reveals something deep and powerful within the human psyche. Through his writing of the insignificance of humanity and of the individual, H. P. Lovecraft ultimately achieved fame and immortality. In a sense he has become the egregore in death of what he did not achieve in life.

The *Necronomicon* is by far Lovecraft's greatest and most famous literary achievement. First appearing in his short story "The Hound" (written in 1922 and published in 1924), the *Necronomicon* is a fictional magical book, or grimoire. The book is purported to have been written by a character known as the "Mad Arab" Abdul Alhazred and contains the history and rites for summoning "the Old Ones." The Old Ones are described as primordial beings who came to the Earth from the sky and now are trapped beneath the ocean in the mystical city of R'lyeh, beneath the South Pacific Ocean. Lovecraft stated that the idea and title for the *Necronomicon* came to him in a dream, although mystical texts of various sorts were a common literary device in gothic and horror writing. However, few fictional books have taken on the life and vitality of Lovecraft's creation.

Lovecraft said that the title was from the Greek language and meant “an image of the law of the dead.” However, other translations of the word have been put forward, and Lovecraft’s etymology is in error. When asked about the *Necronomicon,* Lovecraft stated that most of the “terrible and forbidden books” were in fact quite boring, and it was more fun to create your own, as had so many of his friends and fellow authors.

What makes this all the more intriguing from the perspective of the study of egregores is that a close examination shows that nearly all of the famous magical texts in Western occultism were in some way contrived. The “Solomonic” and “Faustian” literature are prime examples. In Tibet a similar circumstance occurs with “revelations” of the origin and teachings attributed to the founder of Tibetan Buddhism, Guru Padmasambhava, as with the *terma* teachings. In fact, the entire history of Padmasambhava as generally taught did not exist until several hundred years after his death, when it was revealed to twelfth-century Tibetan figure Nyangrel Nyima Ozer (1124–1192) in a series of dreams and visions. Nyangrel said that he was King Trisong Detsen of Tibet (742–797) in a previous life and that he remembered his experiences with Padmasambhava and was simply writing them down.

This was the first codifying of the Padmasambhava story; with it came the formation of the accepted doctrine concerning Padmasambhava’s life and adventures in Tibet. Just as many of the magical texts attributed to antiquity in the West demonstrate poor knowledge of Hebrew, Greek, and Latin, so in Tibet many of the “discovered” teachings and new practices were given a Sanskrit gloss (and often a poor one at that) to make them appear Indian in origin. Thus Lovecraft has a widely accepted precedent both in literature and in esotericism in his creation of the *Necronomicon*—complete with corrupted Greek and Arabic.

These erroneously or even falsely attributed practices, East and West, have not prevented generations of practitioners from having some kind of psychological (if not paranormal) experience—or even enlightenment itself. Neither has the fictional nature of the *Necronomicon* been a stumbling block for those who see it as a gateway to genuine and existing alternate realities, even if it means risking insanity, as in the case of the "Mad Arab" before them.

Lovecraft wrote a backstory or pseudo-history of the *Necronomicon* in which we learn of the origin of the text, its demonic nature, as well as of the adventures and fate of Alhazred. What makes this all the more fascinating is that the book is linked through various fictions to both historical people and locations as well as fictional ones, thus bending the framework of reality for the reader. This is further exacerbated by a variety of editions of the *Necronomicon* appearing in print, each to varying degrees working with or ignoring the *Cthulhu Mythos,* and often being viewed as practical books of magic.

KENNETH GRANT: REVEALER OF DEEP ESOTERIC TRUTH

English ceremonial magician and writer Kenneth Grant (1924–2011) has been described by those who knew him as both the "elder statesman of Twentieth Century magick" and "a schoolboy gone berserk on brimstone aftershave."[2] As the close associate, even if only briefly, of three of the most important characters in modern magic—Aleister Crowley, British occultist Austin Spare (1886–1956), and British Wiccan Gerald Gardner (1884–1964)—Grant had a front row seat at the creation of the magical systems that would dominate the later part of the century: Thelema as

expressed in the Ordo Templi Orientis (OTO), A.·.A.·., Chaos Magic, and Wicca.

In his own works covering half a century of writing, Grant provided a synthesis of the writings of Crowley and Spare, along with unique interpretations of them. In addition, Grant incorporated the mythological hierarchies found in the writings of predominant horror writers, primarily H. P. Lovecraft and Arthur Machen. It is through this inclusion of fiction as well as his extremely verbose writing style that Grant made a memorable mark for himself as a modern occult author.

Writer, illustrator, and self-described magician Alan Moore stated, “It is hard to name another single living [as of 2002] individual who has done more to shape contemporary western thinking with regards to Magic.”[3] And yet, he also called into question Grant’s mental health and emotional maturity: “[Grant’s] grasp upon conventional worldly reality was at best precarious.”[4]

Moore was not alone in this assessment. Even Crowley, whom Grant worked for as personal secretary in exchange for magical instruction, expressed similar views, despite his desire for Grant to continue his magical training. In his biography *Remembering Aleister Crowley,* Grant himself admits that he was “unable to acquire a practical approach to mundane affairs.”[5] Be this as it may, to many people Grant is seen as a revealer of deep esoteric truths regarding the darkest aspects of nature.

It is also through Grant that we get a glimpse of Crowley’s final years. While Israel Regardie is well known for having served “The Beast” (Crowley) twenty years earlier, when he was in his prime, with Grant we see the more solitary man experiencing the effects of a life of adventure catching up with him: ill health and an addiction to heroin (prescribed earlier on for a bronchial infection), frustration

of rationing, and the demands of a prodigious literary output all were taking their toll.

Just as we as sentient beings in this world of matter and the senses spend our time looking for homes to live in, jobs to perform, recreation for amusement, and a place where we belong, why should it be any different for sentient beings of a nonhuman class? Animals adapt to us and we adapt to them; yet when it comes to the invisible, suddenly we are to believe that what we are dealing with is completely fiction—a fiction with no hope of either being or becoming reality.

But what if anything are most spiritual practices but some form of creative fiction? All of the great spiritual luminaries are legendary and yet little historical evidence demonstrates that they even existed, let alone support the miraculous actions they performed. King Solomon, Jesus, Padmasambhava, Rosicrucian founder Christian Rosenkreutz, noted fourteenth-century author Nicholas Flamel and his wife, the renowned benefactress Perenelle Flamel—and many others less well known—exist more as inspirational legends than historical facts. Yet this does not in any way diminish their power as personalities. As we discussed, an individual can be exalted after death by various occult rites and turned into a focal point—their surviving consciousness even recruited to the task—for leading others on a particular spiritual quest. The number of saints in Roman Catholicism and other religions is a virtual testimony to the truth of this.

So then should it be any different with a fictional personality wrapped around a fictional book containing a cosmological vision compiled out of historical mythologies, connected to a real author? Is it surprising that the book and its mythos takes on “a life of its own,” spawning not only additional published stories and legends but also a variety of serious occult practices, academic studies, board games,

and even efforts at reproducing the very thing—a demonic occult text itself?

The name for this now is fan fiction and live action role playing. The question is: Where does fantasy end and alternate reality—or rather a new reality—begin?

No other book written in the twentieth century has been used to answer this question more soundly than H. P. Lovecraft's fictional grimoire, the *Necronomicon.* A favorite source of inspiration for Grant, his words in *Against the Light* perfectly describe the creative and personal life of Lovecraft.

> Have you ever considered, dear Reader, that every time you awaken from the dreams of night or of the day, the forces set in motion by the characters and events that occurred therein do not cease abruptly with your change of consciousness to daytime or to nighttime [?] No, indeed, those creatures of your dream world, set in motion by impulses you no longer own, contrive to expend their energies until their impetus subsides, or until, dear Reader, you sleep again and take up a further chapter in the destiny of your creations which are—all of them—only and entirely yourself.[6]

ROBERT E. HOWARD AND CONAN THE BARBARIAN

Robert Ervin Howard (1906–1936) wrote more than a hundred stories for publication in a career that lasted twelve years. He is widely accepted as the father of the "sword and sorcery genre" with his creation of the character known as Conan the Barbarian. Howard lived his entire life in his

native Texas, and its Wild West atmosphere, larger-than-life characters, and rugged terrain fueled his massive literary output. Howard was primarily self-educated and, as a result, widely read. Just two days prior to the death of his mother from tuberculosis, Howard committed suicide. This was not an impulsive act; he had carefully planned for it. He had expressed suicidal thoughts and had made plans for his own demise several times in the past, only to be interrupted by his mother.

After purchasing three plots, he borrowed a gun from a friend (his own presumably had been hidden by his father) and arranged his affairs. He sat in his 1935 Chevy and shot himself above his right ear. The bullet exited out the left side of his head. He managed to survive for eight hours afterward, but he never regained consciousness. After Howard's death, his father donated his extensive book collection to Howard Payne College in Brownwood, Texas.

In August 1930, Howard wrote a letter to *Weird Tales* magazine that would begin an active correspondence with H. P. Lovecraft. This exchange of letters, opinions, and literary ideas would initiate Howard into the Lovecraft Circle. As mentioned in the previous section, Lovecraft carried on an extensive and detailed campaign of letter writing with his numerous friends and associates. As part of the Lovecraft Circle, Howard was introduced to many authors with whom he had many interests in common, and each member of the group encouraged others to contribute to the various fictional worlds and mythologies they had created. This unique feature of the circle elevated it beyond what is often thought of as "networking" in modern business terms, or a "writers' club," but in many ways it turned the circle into a magical operation wherein the thoughtforms it generated took on vigorous lives of their own. This can be seen by the longevity of the works created by its members almost three-quarters of a century after it was started. Considering that

the genre was pulp fiction, designed for mass consumption and not expected to be or become great literature, this is an amazing feat in itself.

With the nickname “Two-Gun Bob” assumed as an homage to his southwestern origins, Howard wrote several important stories around the *Cthulhu Mythos:* “The Black Stone,” “The Cairn on the Headland,” “The Children of the Night,” and “The Fire of Asshurbanipal.” In addition, he corresponded with *Cthulhu Mythos* writers Clark Ashton Smith, Edgar Hoffman Price, and August Derleth. They all, along with the American science-fiction writer, poet, and editor Donald Wandrei (1908–1987), established Arkham House in 1939 to publish the works of Lovecraft. (Derleth is also attributed with inventing the phrase *Cthulhu Mythos*.)

In April 1932, Howard wrote to Lovecraft and detailed his most recent heroic character, again, something larger than life. This would be Howard’s most famous creation—King Conan the Cimmerian—also known as Conan the Barbarian. Howard later stated, “Conan simply grew up in my mind a few years ago when I was stopping in a little border town on the Rio Grande. I did not create him by any conscious process. He simply stalked full grown out of oblivion and set me at work recording the saga of his adventures.”[7]

Howard would later state to fellow Lovecraft Circle member Clark Ashton Smith:

> While I do not go so far as to believe that stories are inspired by actually existent spirits or powers (though I am rather opposed to flatly deny anything), I have sometimes wondered if it were possible that unrecognized forces from the past or present—or even the future—work through the thoughts and actions of living men. This occurred to me when I was writing the first stories of the Conan

> series especially. I know that for months I had been unable to work up anything sellable. Then the man Conan seemed suddenly to grow up in my mind without much labor on my part and immediately a stream of stories flowed off my pen—or rather, my typewriter—almost without effort on my part. I did not seem to be creating, but rather relating events that had occurred. Episode crowded episode so fast that I could scarcely keep up with them. For weeks I did nothing but write of the adventures of Conan. The character took complete possession of my mind and crowded out everything else in the way of story-telling.[8]

FELLOW MAGICIAN ARTHUR MACHEN

While Grant's admiration for and use of the writings of H. P. Lovecraft in occult practices is well known, he was also a fan of the Welsh writer and fellow magician Arthur Machen (1863–1947). Machen, who was as well a member of the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn, was close friends with fellow Golden Dawn member (and later leader of one of its splinter groups) A. E. Waite (1857–1942). It was through Waite that Machen joined the Golden Dawn, although his relationship to the organization seems more important to historians than it was to Machen, and his membership was short-lived.

The son of an Anglican clergyman, Machen was deeply enthralled with Celtic, mystical Christianity, with a healthy dose of alchemy, Kabbalah, and Hermeticism thrown in for good measure. Despite his distrust of the increasingly rationalistic and technological advances of the age, he was also distrustful of the seemingly neurotic indulgences of spiritualism, and to his credit he required firm proofs of the

reality of paranormal phenomena despite his personal belief in paranormal realities. Simply put, he was at once an irreconcilable romantic caught in dreams of a mystical medieval world that may never really have existed and a pragmatic realist.

His greatest literary achievements were in the gothic horror genre and were read by Lovecraft, Howard, and other members of the Lovecraft Circle. Like Grant, Aleister Crowley also felt that Machen's fiction presented profound occult truths to an unknowing public. Machen's influence as a horror writer was widespread, both during his life and to this very day. However, it is his often ignored involvement in a widely reported "paranormal event" that is of interest to shapers of mass consciousness and public perception.

In August 1914, the British Expeditionary Force in Belgium was in retreat after its first major engagement with German forces. The war—that was supposed to end in a few weeks—was going badly for Allied forces in France, and morale was plummeting. Machen recalled reading the newspapers of the day describing the retreat of British forces and stated that he fell into despair. He was then working as a journalist writing war reports and various propaganda pieces from the home front, and he wrote a piece titled "The Bowman," first published on September 29, 1914, in the *London Evening News*. It was a work of fiction, but this apparently was not clearly stated, as the story presented soon took on a life of its own. The story reports of ghostly apparitions appearing at a critical moment to protect the retreating British soldiers with phantasmal arrows slaying advancing Germans by the thousands. In one report intervention took the shape of a strange cloud that covered the British retreat from German observation.

Desire for such divine (or at least supernatural) intervention was so strong amid a population hearing of

their army in retreat that the report went from featuring not just the ghosts of English longbowmen—as Machen had originally written—but to angels under the direction of St. George, the patron saint of Great Britain. Churches and other religious bodies took up the story to inspire, comfort, and encourage their congregations, whose fathers and sons were fighting in France for reasons that were not always very clear. Soon stories appeared of enlisted men and officers who claimed to have seen something miraculous on the day in question—but these were all after the fact, and none were ever substantiated. The British Society for Psychical Research reported in December 1915 that no firsthand accounts of the phenomena in question could be ascertained.

Machen would later write a letter of regret stating that it "was as if I had touched the button and set in action a terrific, complicated mechanism of rumours that pretended to be sworn truth, of gossip that posed as evidence, of wild tarradiddles that good men most firmly believed."[9] Over time this event—one regretted by Machen—went from being one of divine intervention to wishful thinking, coupled with collective hallucination induced by the stress of battle. Yet the desire for supernatural intervention in our world, particularly that of St. George—the patron saint of the British egregore, if you will—was not enough. Many in the occult community saw it as a magical act, either intentional or unintentional by Machen, using the collective energies of the mass mind. Here Machen was not simply raising the spirits of his readers during a time of despair; he was in fact raising *real* spirits, an army of them to do battle with very real corporeal enemies. Although there appears to be no truth in this given that Machen himself regretted the story, the effect was nonetheless the same: a collective thoughtform had been created, it was attached to an

egregore (St. George), and it was strengthened through repetition and the enactment of religious rites.

Machen himself pointed out in the introduction to his selected writings from Dickens, *A Handy Dickens,* something Grant would seize upon in *Outside the Circles of Time*.

> Arthur Machen drew attention to a profound magical fact when he observed that an entity such as Mrs. Gamp—the inimitable creation of Dickens—is known to almost all literate inhabitants of this planet, whereas Mrs. X, Y or Z—our next-door neighbor—is only known to the few that constitute her immediate circle of acquaintances. Yet Mrs. X is "real," and Mrs. Gamp is "unreal," the figment of a human mind. But that mind, being truly creative, was potent to imbue its images with some of its vital and enduring energy so that the images came alive and haunted the minds of countless individuals.[10]

The description given is clearly that of a thoughtform, if not of a full-blown egregore (even one accidently created through required reading and ritualized Christmas plays and shows). It is complete with some intelligence at one end, given the degree of longevity that we see in Dickens's works. And for works such as those of Lovecraft or Howard it is easy for the psychologist to say that what we are reading is simply the creative process of their subconscious revealing its contents in the form of dreams or sudden flashes. It is equally simplistic for the occultist or spiritualist to say that these and other artists are but channels for superior intelligences—particularly when the content of their creation is not something beyond the normal understanding of the artist. That is, we rarely see science-fiction writers describing actual science. Nor in their writings did Lovecraft

or Howard point us to new archaeological discoveries. In the end it may be a little of both, with the experience and content of the artist's mind being the true canvas upon which the masterpiece is created—even if inspired from something or somewhere from the great beyond.

It is easy to see why, for Grant and other esoteric writers as well, fiction and reality at some point became intertwined and unrecognizable from one another. Grant even stated that the purpose of his books was to prepare people for "unfamiliar states of consciousness," making the reading of his works a magical act itself. Here we see that magic was no longer something conjured up by a small group in a rented lodge room but instead a single story, with a single idea, read by millions of people, and believed in, even if just momentarily, by many of them. Intentionally or unintentionally Machen had let a genie out of the bottle, and his having done so was a fitting testimony to the influence of magic on mass media in the twentieth century.

6

The Egregore of the Ancient Mystical Order Rosae Crucis (AMORC)

Since its appearance in 1915, the Ancient Mystical Order Rosae Crucis (AMORC), better known as the Rosicrucian Order, has grown from humble beginnings in New York City to a worldwide organization. Although its height arguably occurred in the 1990s, AMORC has still managed to maintain a premier place among Western esoteric and initiatic organizations. Its most recognized headquarters is in San Jose, California. AMORC also maintains distinct administrative offices and temples in countries across the globe, providing teachings in nineteen different languages.

In 1930 a series of five documents—or manifestos, as they were called—totaling about fifty pages, were sent to select members of AMORC. They contained the personal and private recollections and struggles of the organization's founder, Harvey Spencer Lewis (1883–1939); they were to be read, signed, and returned. Titled *Pronunziamento to All the World,* the cover page gave a listing of no less than twenty-four "Signatories to the International Rosicrucian Council" along with "others."

The main page had an impressive German-language title stating that the document was from the "International

Headquarters of the Supreme Council of the Ancient Mystic Order Rosae Crucis," followed by "S.S.S., Berlin, Germany 1930." At the bottom it claimed to be "Issued through the united Organizations of the Rose Cross," followed by a list of organizations: Ancient Mystical Order Rosae Crucis (AMORC), Brotherhood of the Rose Cross, Fraternitas Hermetica Lucis, Ordo Templi Orientis, Collegium Pansophia, and Societas Pansophia.

To cap this off the document also claimed to be "the *Second* Official FAMA issued by the Original Fraternity Rosae Crucis since the Seventeenth Century." We find affirmation that all of this work was being undertaken for the good of humanity and "for the COMING NEW AGE."[1]

While the document contains three signatures, one belonging to H. S. Lewis, it is doubtful that the mentioned "signatories" existed in any uniform manner; if they did exist they were probably more honorary than active. However, this document should not be seen as simply another piece of internal marketing, because members who received it had already been in the order for well over a dozen years and in that way alone had demonstrated their loyalty (or at least their continued interest) in AMORC's style of esoteric teachings. This document, and ones similar to it, are in fact magical operations. Here the semihistorical and mythological Rosicrucian fraternity, a worldwide body of Adepts, is affirmed, listed, and again announced to all the world—or at least to those who had been members for approximately fifteen years or more and who belonged to the order's highest and last 12th degree.

What makes these documents interesting is that, despite their title page's dedication "to all the world," these special lectures were to be signed and returned to the Supreme Grand Lodge located in San Jose, California. Thus the secret is both revealed to the worthy and concealed from the profane. The egregore is strengthened, and the image and

ideals of a worldwide Rosicrucian movement, under the direction of AMORC and guidance of the invisible Adepts of the Great White Brotherhood, is reinforced. That which is fiction slowly materializes into fact; the dream becomes reality, and history is justified. To only the most tried and trusted members, those who have demonstrated their loyalty, is the Truth revealed.

The specialness of this experience and the emotional energy it creates and directs toward the entity cannot be overstated. The publications to which we refer are dated "Second Edition. 1946" and contain the following statement by Ralph M. Lewis (1904–1987), son and spiritual heir of Harvey Spencer Lewis. "And so in 1918 the late Imperator of AMORC, Dr. H. Spencer Lewis, issued in manuscript form a new Confessio R. C. Fraternitatis, and I here bring to you a reproduction of it with the hope that you may be so Cosmically illuminated as to attain that state of Cosmic Consciousness which it has brought to many who have been privileged to read it previously."[2]

The transformative nature of reading the text is affirmed, and what other schools might call a guided meditation, or "pathworking," is presented. The information is not given for its own sake but rather to transform the student—to bring him or her closer to a specific realization. This is reinforced by the "averment" that is at the end of each booklet.

> Standing in the presence of the God of my Heart and ever mindful of the Terror of the Threshold, I do solemnly affirm that I have carefully read and meditated upon the contents of this manifesto. I further affirm that at that supreme moment when I was conscious of the spiritual surge within my being that enthralled and caused me to ascend in consciousness above and beyond my mortal and physical environment, and when I was also aware of

> the invisible presence of the Cosmic Hosts, I did affix my signature below and record the hour, day, month and year of this Cosmic experience. I do also solemnly avouch by these same tokens that I have permitted no other eyes but mine to peruse the contents of this manifesto.[3]

HARVEY SPENCER LEWIS: THE FOUNDER OF AMORC

The pages that follow give a more detailed description of Harvey Spencer Lewis, the aforementioned Imperator of AMORC. These descriptions detail his childhood, his early leanings toward mysticism, and the experiences that directed him toward his life-changing journey to France in the early twentieth century—a journey that he would claim put him in contact with some of the last remaining "Rosicrucians" in France. He repeatedly affirmed that these connections conferred upon him the requisite authority for his establishment of the Ancient Mystical Order Rosae Crucis (AMORC) in 1915 in New York City.

The story that follows is related in a style typical of the day. We are told of HSL's education, spiritual searching, and, importantly, the psychic experiences that formed the direction of his life. While meditating in his favorite church, Lewis explains that the following experience unfolded.

> I heard a voice, clearly and distinctly, not from within me, but from without. Even as I write this my entire nervous system is affected, emotionally, for I can easily hear the sound when the first word was spoken; it was "Peace!" . . . At first I saw no one, or no thing. I looked at the Cross, and while it appeared no different than before, I did detect

> between me and the Cross there was a faint mist. . . . I realized that the misty substance was but two or three feet in front of my own body. Continuing to gaze *at* it and not *through* it, I saw that it had a form. . . . A feeling of dizziness came over me, and I closed my eyes.[4]

Then after a period of time:

> Slowly I brought my gaze back to the figure before me, and this time it was more intense or rather more opaque. I gazed into the face of the figure. It was indistinct . . . yet all of the figure was of a white or light mist like a thick, white smoke. Again words came from the lips of the figure. . . . They impressed me as coming from a Holy, Infinite Mind, and I listened with a feeling of respect and appreciation, but not awed or perplexed.
>
> What was said to me, in substance was this: If I wished to know more about the Rosicrucians and their teachings, I must prepare for an initiation into the fraternity which had an exoteric body . . . that I would find naught about the fraternity in any book or paper, for its secrets had never been published and would not be published; that I must find illumination from within and not from without; that he who spoke to me was an AMORCUS of the ancient fraternity and had been selected to be my guide, until I was prepared to cross the threshold and continue alone; that the exoteric body of the fraternity no longer existed in America, and had not existed for the past 101 years; . . . that I should devote every Thursday evening to attunement for guidance; that the next exoteric body of the fraternity would be in France, or was still there, or

> something of this kind. There was probably considerably more said . . . but these facts did come to me either at that time through the speech made or the following Thursday night's period of meditation when I heard a voice speaking in my home but saw no figure.[5]

Continuing in the third booklet Lewis states that during these weekly sessions a series of "Seven Master Minds" revealed themselves to him, and as one would speak, the others could be sensed or heard in the background. He then states:

> It appears then—and this must someday be proven—that each of these quite distinct personalities are previous incarnations of my present soul and mind, and that in the recesses of the mind—which is perpetual and constant with the soul in all its incarnations—there are niches or chambers wherein is stored and even preserved the personal entity of each incarnation's conscious existence. . . . Thus, the soul may have twelve such chambers, each chamber representing a possible incarnation of the soul wherein is recorded, and immortally preserved, the memory "storehouse" of each incarnated personality. Therefore, the mind of man *in each incarnation* is a cumulative mind, a resultant of the addition or combination of all past personality minds. In my own case, there were but seven previous phases of the soul . . . already complete . . .[6]

However, it is important to draw our attention to the preamble that accompanies the third lecture. It appears

slightly out of place, as if to draw our attention to it—to drive home an important point.

> Now, my Brothers and Sisters, I fully realize that what I have written in the last few paragraphs [of the previous lesson] is decidedly difficult to understand, and that to those who do not know me or our work it may well sound like either the raving of a mad mind or the fiction of a clever brain. The reason that it is neither of these, and likely to be rejected, has forced me to withhold the TRUTH and in its place present a different version of my first introduction to the Order Rosae Crucis. Read on and realize, if you can, what it has meant to me to know and always have impressed upon my mind that the real facts and TRUTH must be veiled and the FICTION exploited because fiction seemed more plausible than truth. *I who had become disgusted with the fiction theories of scientists, when most desiring the truth, now understood why* TRUTH MAKES US FREE ONLY WHEN UNTRUTH HAS EXHAUSTED ITS POWER TO ENSLAVE US.[7]

This is followed by the following footnote: “As has been previously explained, the early history of the Order for this jurisdiction, prepared for public reading, had to veil many facts which now can be told in these private manifestos.”[8]

The remaining manifestos shed light upon his journey to France and meetings with the last remaining members of a long inactive lodge, in a wretched state of disrepair, in Toulouse. This is accompanied by a series of psychic visions and conversations with the aged members, with his host acting as translator. The final manifestos in the series give an ominous prophecy regarding the purpose of the order, insights into further spiritual crises experienced by Lewis,

and the statement that “Brothers and Sisters” must help him prepare for this reincarnation so as to continue the work he started.

Lewis’s French host and spiritual instructor states:

> No doubt you understand by this that our Order is pledged to combat the efforts of one great institution, which has for ages held the minds and souls of the masses in the grip of ignorance, fear, and superstition. This is the Hierarchy of the . . . From the days when the Master Jesus was chained by the hands of the Roman bigots, our Order has been secretly and sacredly pledged to prepare man and woman for the hour, when the hand of evil reaches out in the name of God to stifle the soul and blunt the mind. This, too, will be your solemn duty, your obligation, and to which you must pledge your life and possessions and your every earthly act and power, before you may receive from our hands the final key, the last and lost word, the jewel and the blessings, without which you can do naught.
>
> And so, in the year 1915, . . . your country will quietly enter the cycle of preparation for the coming greater battle in your own land. By the year 1920 your work, if performed according to the Law L.L.L. [Light, Life, and Love], will have reached a point where it will have Peace and Power of its own established in every division of your country, for so it is decreed in all the ancient papers, bearing upon the destinies of nations and peoples. Then—soon thereafter—will come the day of conflict within your country’s boundaries, when the Sign of the Cross will be held aloft by the . . . under the rule of the King of Darkness, and it will be met and neutralized by the true Sign of the Cross, held in the hearts and

minds of your Brothers and Sisters in every city and state. To your assistance will come out other Brothers of the Holy Craft of King Solomon, whose workmen have been laying the material stones upon which your esoteric structure can be builded.

Naturally you will suffer much, individually and collectively, before the day and hour of triumph comes. But these sorrows, these tests and trials will make your souls purer and stronger, and you as the Builder of the Great Temple of Human Souls, will meet great opposition, and must sacrifice the greater part of your life that truth may come. Some time, when you least expect it, you will find in your country the place where the secret R. C. Stone was placed by our delegates, the "Monks of the Mount" . . . and where again you will meet face to face the Master, who has guided you here. . . . I now ask you to pledge to us that you will take up the work FOR man's freedom, AGAINST man's slavery; for MAN's knowledge against MAN's IGNORANCE, for Light against Darkness, for OUR ORDER against the . . . ![9]

AMORC AND THE CATHEDRAL OF THE SOUL

The existence of the "Cathedral of the Soul" was first announced in the January issue of *The Rosicrucian Digest.* The first edition of *Liber 777: The Cathedral of the Soul: Its Origin, Purpose, and Program of Services* (later renamed *The Celestial Sanctum*) was written by Charles Dana Dean (1878–1933), an early AMORC grand master of North America, and made available a month later to members. The September 1932 issue of *The Rosicrucian Digest* described this psychic creation as follows: "It [Cathedral of

the Soul] is an imaginary, ethereal Cathedral, first created in thought and then sponsored and maintained by thought, and it today is a living example of thought power. Contacting this Cathedral of the Soul in thought is equivalent to contacting a sacred shrine on the earth plane."[10] It further goes on to say that "the Cathedral is a spiritual creation resulting from the concentration of spiritual thoughts and spiritual vibrations directed to one point from the thousands of minds on earth. In all of the Oriental philosophies and religions such a focalization of thought and spiritual meditation and contemplation is not only possible and feasible but a great probability."[11]

Harvey Spencer Lewis, Imperator of AMORC and creator of the Cathedral of the Soul, gives the following description of its function and purpose in his January 1930 announcement in *The Rosicrucian Digest.*

> Our members are to hear much about this Cathedral of the Soul in the near future, and at present I wish merely to announce its name and present to you a brief picture of what it is. This cathedral is that great holy of holies and Cosmic sanctum maintained by the beams of thought waves of thousands of our most advanced members, who have been prepared and trained to direct these beams of thought at certain periods of the day and the week toward one central point, and there becomes a manifest power, a creative force, a health-giving and peace-giving nucleus far removed from the material trials and problems, limitations and destructive elements of the earth plane.
>
> The Cathedral of the Soul shall be your Cathedral and mine, and the dwelling place of the great masters of the past and future.[12]

Like many psychic creations, it appears that initially working with the development of the "Cathedral" was limited to select members of the organization and then expanded to the general membership. A specific image was suggested, that of a cathedral, and times for meditation. There was some discussion even in the early years of this work about how long such a practice should continue and whether it should be abandoned completely after the organization was firmly established to avoid having too much influence on members. While the term *egregore* was not used (and in fact, AMORC did not start using the term until it entered the popular occult lexicon in the 1990s), the development of an egregore is what was being discussed and practiced.

Despite the importance that the Cathedral of the Soul plays in AMORC's practices, the ideas presented in conjunction with it at times appear inconsistent and contradictory. While the most current edition of *Liber 777* suggests that members and nonmembers may use any symbolic image that they are comfortable with—something from nature, a favorite spot, an imaginary location, or an AMORC temple—much of the earlier teachings focus on the use of the Cathedral image drawn by Lewis.

Dean writes in *Liber 777:*

> All through the years of 1915 to 1922, he [HSL] selected those advanced and prepared initiates of the brotherhood who could help him in his creation. Working through the long hours of the night, writing letters and papers of instruction to these several hundred associates, he prepared them and strengthened them in the method of attuning with him so that they might come together in the Cosmic and there have communion and lay the foundation for this great Cathedral. Hundreds of

letters were written, several thousand experimental contacts were made, and many hours of mental and spiritual labor were devoted to evolving the plans and the features of this new conception of the human mind. . . .

There are hundreds of others who never cease to speak of the joy and happiness, and the inspiring benefits that came to them through their communions and contacts in the Cosmic while aiding in the creation of this Cathedral. Silence regarding the plans and the work being carried on was one of the essentials, and we know from letters received recently, how happy thousands of our members are to know that the great work is finished now and that announcement of the existence of the Cathedral of the Soul can be made.[13]

Further:

It is my pleasure to submit to our members some of the details regarding this Cathedral, and knowledge as how our members may benefit by its existence. . . . As a *symbol* of the Cathedral we have adopted a picture shown in this pamphlet, drawn by the pen of H. Spencer Lewis himself, so that we may have an emblem by which to express a reflection of our spiritual ideas. This symbol contains many of the elements which he had in his mind as being typical of the magnificent and inspiring grandeur of the *invisible* Cathedral. . . .

In this Cathedral, provision has been made for a Cosmic Choir where the voices of specially prepared members of our organization here in America, and

in other lands, will be heard at times chanting and singing the sacred anthems that have been composed by inspired Masters of our organization in the past. At other times those who contact this Cathedral and dwell in it will hear the Music of the Spheres and the Cosmic Melodies as though played upon the grandest organ the world has ever known. In the East of this Cathedral our members will find a beautiful altar in a magnificent apse, illuminated by the violet light of Cosmic vibrations.

Above the altar will be suspended by magnetic forces a jeweled TRIANGLE, with point downward. This is the emblem of the Cosmic Trinity. The three symbols at its corners, blazing with violet fire, represent LIGHT, LIFE, LOVE—the Cosmic names of the TRIUNE GODHEAD. From the center of the dais will come the voice of the visible or invisible Master or Teacher who at times will instruct and inspire our members with messages and illuminating lessons. There will be alcoves and small chapels on each side of the Cathedral's nave, in which the individual members may dwell alone, in silent meditation and prayer, seeking peace and consolation in times of suffering and anguish. There will be communion rooms in which members may meet the Masters and speak with them and receive direct illumination and instruction, advice and guidance.[14]

Daily Communion Services

On certain days of the week there will be various convocations held in this great Cathedral by the coming together of the minds of thousands of our members attuned throughout the world to this focalized and centralized area of Cosmic Consciousness. . . . As part of the magnanimous

> plans of the Imperator, he will have definite periods throughout the month when he, personally, will direct the healing work in the Cathedral, . . . at other times the Imperator will bring the Holy Assembly in contact with some of the Great Masters of the *Great White Lodge* who will expound an inspiring message.[15]
>
> When special ceremonies are being conducted by one of the Masters of the Great White Lodge, the Triangle over the altar will be especially bright in its violet illumination.[16]
>
> There are no other rules and regulations regarding the process for making the contact with the Cathedral than those [preliminary prayers] stated above. Considerable time has been given to the preparation of these instructions to make sure that every point that might be given to our members has been included. This method of making the contact is more or less an individual one with each member and all we can do is to tell you the general method, and have you work out your own process and there *earn* as well as *learn The Way* to the Cathedral. Remember the words of the Master Jesus, "I am the Way!" *The Way* is through the Spirit of Christ, through the principle of the *Christus,* through the divinity of our soul, and through your longings and desires.[17]

The Cathedral of the Soul was later renamed the "Celestial Sanctum," and the idea of mass collective effort was seen in its various healing services and in the AMORC practice known as Medifocus. Here members and interested

nonmembers would find on the final page of each monthly (and later bimonthly and quarterly) issue of the organization's magazine, *The Rosicrucian Digest,* a drawing of a world leader and a phrase. In the magazine's fiftieth anniversary issue, which was published in November 1977, there is a sketch of President Jimmy Carter as the personality for the month of December. The code word to be used in connection with him was *EXPED.* A drawing of Britain's Queen Elizabeth is given for February 1978, and the code word to be used with her was *SCALE.*

The key to the phrases, which acted like mantras, was given at one point to the members so that they and others would send specific thoughts to the identified leader. The ideas were general enough—peace, friendship, harmony, and so on—and nondirective as to any specific manner. This practice was abandoned after many years, and instead a note appeared suggesting that members simply send out thoughts of goodwill to one or more leaders of their choosing. As stated in the May 1987 issue, "Medifocus is a special humanitarian monthly membership activity with which each Rosicrucian is acquainted. On the first Sunday of each month, at any hour you select, you will enter into a five-minute period of meditation, focusing your thought upon a specific troubled area of the world." It also affirmed that the "basic purpose of Medifocus is a humanitarian effort directed toward world peace."[18]

THE THIRD MIND

> *The coordination of knowledge and effort of two or more people, who work toward a definite purpose, in the spirit of harmony . . . No two minds ever come together without thereby creating a third, invisible,*

> *intangible force, which may be likened to a third mind [Master Mind].*
>
> NAPOLEON HILL, *THINK AND GROW RICH*

The third point articulated in the above quote from *Think and Grow Rich* is the critical element, and we see it in the creative life of many individuals.

Beat author William S. Burroughs and artist Brion Gysin called this phenomenon the “Third Mind” and wrote a book of that title, consisting of their collaborations. They further elaborated not just on the idea of a creative impulse at work but also gave various methods to engage and express it. Burroughs himself typified the notion of an established anti-establishment character. Like many representatives of the Beat, Hippie, and general counterculture generation movements, Burroughs was self-destructive, self-indulgent, and unpredictable, and he sought out direct experience as the basis for his philosophy and art. His saving grace was that he was a brilliant and successful writer, bringing his wide and varied life story into his work. He was very much a magician in theory and practice—transforming appearances and meanings as he willed, always seeking a different and deeper experience and expression of self. Given his pronounced belief in the power of the mind to create very real physical phenomena, and his chaotic drug-induced lifestyle, the unfortunate and deadly shooting of his romantic partner Joan Vollmer in Mexico cannot be seen as an “accident” in the true sense of the word. Rather it should be viewed more simply as the working out of the energy of their collective actions. In short, the magical being they had engendered was taking its toll.

The Third Mind was beyond any conventional ideas of art—or even the “anti-art movement”—being an exploration of the deep psychic potential that went beyond the usual

humanistic and political philosophies. As a result, the Third Mind was itself a phenomena with deep political implications as it was clearly nonconformist, in all that such a word can imply, but left up to the individual to explore and realize.

Here the inspiration became a force to be expressed, as well as contacted. Techniques (i.e., rituals) were employed to this end, featuring drugs, alcohol, sex, cathartic emotional releases, meditations and visualizations, acts of "cultural blasphemy" of a sort, and the fundamental belief that reality could be created, destroyed, and rearranged in some fashion.

Assumption of the God form, guru yoga, and the bumper-sticker question "What would Jesus do?" are all methods of entraining one's mind to a particular expression of "cosmic" intelligence and, depending on the methods used, to an egregore as well. Thus one can tune in to the nature of the "mind of Hermes" without having to do so through the methods of a single group and its attendant egregore. Simply asking a question (such as "What would Jesus do?") is a means of directing one's attention to a specific spiritual or enlightened intelligence or mind and its methods of expression.

In the late twentieth century the modern British occultist and author Peter Carroll developed Chaos Magic, which attempted to overcome this issue of dedication to a single practice or path and instead sought to use anything the individual desired to use as part of the process. Whereas the motto of Thelema[3] drew its inspiration from sixteenth-century French renaissance writer and humanist Francois Rabelais and his statement "Do what thou wilt," the Chaos magicians drew their guiding maxim from the hashish-smoking Assassins[† 1]: "Nothing is true, everything is permitted." It is not surprising that part of the inspiration for Chaos Magic derived from science fiction and fantasy, particularly the works of modern British science-fiction

author Michael Moorcock and contemporary British fantasy author Terry Pratchett (just as Grant sought to use Lovecraft), as well as from the art, writings, and magical methods of Austin Osman Spare. Although there was a tremendous effort to support the principles of Chaos Magic in terms of science (quantum physics in particular), the greatest impact that the movement has achieved appears to be in the limited domain of occult subculture.

The leaning toward the shadowy side of the psyche that Chaos Magic taps into is only marginally different from the more hardcore approach of various Left-Hand Path groups, Grant's Ordo Templi Orientis (OTO), and many paths dedicated to goetic practice. These paths also tend to share a common fate—the inability to sustain themselves beyond very small groups. The overarching themes of heroic individualism coupled with the crippling disintegration and deadening weight of "demonic" and "qlipothic" attractions makes cooperation around common ideals and objectives difficult to sustain for all but the most dedicated.

7

Freeing Oneself from the Influence of Egregores

If we follow the train of thought expounded in this book, then we are faced with several questions, principally, “Can we ever avoid or escape the influence of egregores?” If we take the definition that an egregore is a collective attitude or consciousness, then they appear to be forever appearing whenever even small groups of individuals come together for any length of time or common purpose. If we take the more technical view that egregores are only those psychic collectives that are actually created and fed via ritual and with a specific purpose and that they have a preternatural intelligence at one end, then we miss the more dynamic and fluid reality of what constitutes “created” and “ritual.” It is very possible, and most likely, that the majority of egregores are born out of necessity—one might even say *accidentally*—and subsequently mature as formal mechanisms of acting, interacting, learning, and survival are established, not unlike other living organisms.

So can egregores be avoided? Yes, but only if human beings can be avoided. If we take the words of the Gospels to have any truth to them, then “when two or more are gathered in my name I will be in the midst of them.”

While we can learn to dissolve the energy that connects us to an egregore (as we saw being suggested by the occult

masters) and to direct
it to a nonspecific but generally beneficial purpose (as we see in Tibetan Buddhism with “dedication of the merit”), it is more important to be clear about what our purposes and expected outcomes from affiliating with specific groups are—be it association with a street gang, the Parent Teacher Association, an esoteric order, or a loosely organized artists’ circle. If we are to achieve our goals in life through affiliation with an organization or participation in a movement, it is critical that we know what our goals are to begin with. Only by having a clear understanding of what we desire to accomplish can we know if the groups we associate with will help or hinder us in our journey. Clearly knowing our goals can also act as a beneficial checklist during our participation with groups to see if our time is being well spent. It is too easy to get distracted by promises before we join and by other activities once we are in the door. Knowing what it is we desire to accomplish and comparing what is being promised and what is really being delivered is a way to keep us moving toward our goals—and away from those who would use or abuse us in pursuit of their own.

Be it the spontaneously arising “genius cluster” as suggested in *The Geography of Genius* by the highly regarded American author Eric Weiner, or the more individually created “master mind” from American self-help author Napoleon Hill’s *Think and Grow Rich,* groups of like-minded people are created not by chance but out of necessity. In a word, necessity breeds genius, but it is also what breeds resilience and personal mastery. The only thing we may very well get *out* of a knitting circle or occult lodge is what we really want—deep down inside—to begin with. We need to know why we are really participating in the first place. In the end, over the Temple of Apollo at Delphi (and said to have been derived from the Egyptian temple at

Luxor) was not engraved, “Know the party line and conform” but rather “Know thyself.”

Just as we can destroy egregores—be they of the classical form wherein they are ensouled by an intelligence or of the modern definition wherein they are a collective consciousness but not of a fully autonomous nature—we can also free ourselves from their influence.

To free ourselves we need to limit our connection and contact with the members, rituals, symbols, and activities of the egregore and its material anchors to the group. This may be a simple matter in some cases: we stop paying dues, attending meetings, or reading the organizational literature. Organizations such as social and business clubs will have a weaker group mind than a religion. An organization that we join as an adult will also generally have a weaker pull on us than one that we join in our childhood or teenage years. However, each individual enters into various relationships out of personal needs. Each must also find their own reasons for staying, modifying, or leaving various associations. School alumni associations—whose main area of focus is constant identification with one’s high school or college, particularly around its sports teams—is one of the stranger manifestations of a group mind and also one of the most common. Some psychic or emotional connections or “memberships,” if you will, are easier to form than others simply due to their size. It is not possible to completely leave the egregore of a nation, although its nature and strength will vary from location to location. The influence of egregores will also wane over time as new and different concerns take a predominant role in one’s life—the key word being *concerns.* Emotions are the food of egregores as well as what direct and define our actions. Whatever we love the most is where we will find the greatest concentration of our life energy, our magical force, and with it the egregores we are in communion with.

For students of esotericism, the main areas of concern are separation from the egregore of a dominant religious movement, or even from one or more initiatic organizations to which they belong or have had previous affiliations. Separating from these requires a focused effort, possibly repeated attempts, and a clear realization of why one joined in the first place and why one now wishes to leave, or at least why one wishes to minimize the influence it has on one's life and its spiritual path.

Some entities are more difficult to identify: Are they a collective consciousness or a classical egregore complete with preternatural intelligence?

For example, in recent decades the reach, consistency, and frequency of messages made available through mass media have transformed many areas of popular culture from entertainment into lifestyles. Whether it is *Star Wars* and people identifying themselves as Jedi or Sith in the religion category of any given census, or those individuals who follow musical bands or personalities, the purpose of media is, on its most fundamental level, to create an egregore. This can also mean the arising of an umbrella movement, something general yet clearly identifiable, such as the New Age movement, Steampunk, or even various historical (and not so historical) reenactment groups. Each group will have its own "typical" member, a stereotype or archetype that is identifiable and, more importantly, marketable. Common characteristics and values can be used to create temporary or transient collective minds, or egregores. As a result of their relative strengths, and particular emphases, these forms of media-created and media-sustained groups often have a highly transient membership. In short, this type of membership is something one grows out of over time as various unrelated needs and obligations increasingly demand one's time and attention. When one does not grow

out of them or allows them to dominate one's relationships they can easily be seen as a detriment.

"THERAPEUTIC BLASPHEMY" TO BREAK THEIR HOLD

An interesting theme discussed in Joscelyn Godwin's book *The Theosophical Enlightenment* is that of *therapeutic blasphemy,* a term Godwin borrows from one of Britain's most prominent and controversial promoters of Buddhism in the West, Urgyen Sangharakshita (Dennis Philip Edward Lingwood). The idea of therapeutic blasphemy is, in essence, that Christianity is such a pervasive influence in Western culture that only by a positive and concerted effort can one break free of its pernicious (and largely unconscious) influence. In particular, all those born in a Christian society (even if not raised Christian, even nominally) must go through a period of public denunciation of Christianity, or therapeutic blasphemy. Otherwise they are doomed to remain perpetually under the thrall of the cult of the creed-making fishermen.

The Buddhist teacher and writer Sangharakshita describes the effects of therapeutic blasphemy in his book *The Priceless Jewel* as "transforming his unconscious resistance to, and reaction against, Christianity into an integral part of his conscious attitude." In short, we are to free ourselves publicly and consciously from private and unconscious indoctrination.

This conscious desacralization of the dominant religious themes acts as a compensatory measure against their powerful yet very unconscious presence. If done as a therapeutic measure to bring forth and consciously address and overcome the various neurotic tendencies previous teachings have created, it can be a useful tool on the path

to self-awakening. If, however, it is done disrespectfully—out of cynicism, pride, or without appreciation for what positive lessons may have been learned—then desacralization, or therapeutic blasphemy, loses its therapeutic component and simply becomes blasphemy.

PSYCHOSYNTHESIS AND THERAPEUTIC BLASPHEMY

An unconscious means of attempting to free oneself from a religious or spiritual egregore may be seen in the various forms of pathology or resistance to the spiritual that may take place. This form of spiritual denial is not limited to traditional religion but is experienced in some initiatic and esoteric groups as well, wherein the pressure of awakening is resisted rather than relaxed and allowed to flow freely. Such a crisis is a normal part of any path; however, there is another aspect to it that is pathological in which one reaches an inner plateau. How long one stays there is not clear. In a healthy spiritual group it is the function of spiritual directors or masters to assist in keeping the student moving forward to broader horizons and ever-greater awakenings and freedom.

Yet we also see that not all groups function consistently with their ideal, and it is possible for members to outgrow them. Here resistance may not be so much to the idea and expression of the “superconscious” but rather to specific limiting and doctrinal issues representative of the egregore. In this instance a certain degree of therapeutic blasphemy may be needed to free the individual from the limits of the collective. This can be done smoothly and privately, but often it is done explosively and publicly, thereby creating additional problems.

Possibly the best example of acquiring this sort of freedom can be understood in the Tibetan doctrine of refuge, where one moves from placing complete trust and faith in the historical doctrine to placing it instead in one's teachers and then, finally, in oneself alone. This is the meaning of taking outer, inner, and secret refuge. To take refuge solely in one's "[psychic] channels, [psychic] winds, and [essential consciousness] drops" requires separating oneself from the egregore. Or, in more common language, "If you meet the Buddha on the road, kill him."

In many respects freeing oneself from an egregore—particularly one with which there has been a long or even multigenerational association, or in which the group provided essential guidance and assistance at critical points in life—can feel a great deal like a betrayal and has strong similarities to standard deprogramming from religious and political mind-control movements.

> Light drives out darkness. This simple truth is the practical key to the problem of how to combat demons. A demon perceived, i.e., on whom the light of consciousness is thrown, is already a demon rendered impotent. This is why the desert fathers and other solitary saints had so much experience with demons. They cast their light on them. And they did so as representatives of human consciousness in general, for whoever withdraws from the world becomes representative of the world; he becomes a "son of man." And being a "son of man," the solitary saint attracts the demons haunting the subconscious of mankind, making them *appear*, i.e., bringing them to the light of consciousness and thus rendering them impotent. . . . The famous "temptations" of St. Anthony were . . . acts of healing the humanity of

> his time from demoniacal obsession. They were acts of sacred magic, bringing demons to the light of consciousness illumined from above, through which they were reduced to impotence.[1]

Whether we believe in the reality of an egregore being the home for one or more invisible intelligences is not that important. It might be safe from the practical point of view to assume that they are always home to something "invisible"—particularly when dealing with those egregores whose influence is clearly negative, limiting and seen as an end in itself, and as such, destructive of individual awakening and expression. Then, at that moment when freedom from the invisible influence is achieved, it is not simply an individual victory but a victory for all humanity and all of Creation. One takes on the role of St. Anthony, or more precisely that of the bodhisattva who performs the practice of *tonglen,* or giving and receiving. Just as we are told that Christ took on the sins of humanity to purify mankind, so we are told that spiritual masters can take on the sins of their students to aid them on their path. The Tibetan Buddhist practice of tonglen embodies this idea, first as an ideal, but also with the very real ability to psychically transform both the meditator and the one or ones for whom they are meditating. Granted this represents a high level of practice, but it is reported across the literature into the modern era.

SPIN THREE TIMES TO THE LEFT

The author of *Meditations on the Tarot* gives a somewhat peculiar and almost simplistic method of freeing oneself from the influence of an egregore. Of course we must bear in mind that for this particular author all egregores are seen

as negative, and only a pure devotion to the ideals put forth by the Christian scriptures is seen as protection against all negative forces, including those called “hierarchies of the Left” or the “Fallen Angels” often categorized as demons.

For protection against the “artificial demons” or “egregores” as he calls them, one who is afflicted is to make the sign of the cross to the north, south, east, and west and repeat the first verse of the 68th Psalm: “Let God arise, let his enemies be scattered; let those who hate him flee before him! As smoke is driven away, so drive them away; as wax melts before fire, let the wicked perish before God!” One must also spin three times to the left and cross oneself. Now, this notion of spinning may appear silly, even childish; however, it is based on the idea of movement or throwing off the negative connections the egregores may have with you. This is just as one would turn quickly to avoid being touched. Moving to the left is also to move in the direction associated with “banishing” in ritual magic. Spinning, like singing, is correlated with bringing forth the energies of life.

The symbolism of the cross is well known both for its standard religious as well as esoteric value. In his book *The Nature and Use of Ritual for Spiritual Attainment,* Professor Peter Roche de Coppens states:

> In the Egyptian religion we can find the most direct and explicitly “exoteric” statement concerning the Cross and its inner and practical meaning. The Egyptians called the Ankh the Sign of Life, the “door” to awakening and renewed spiritual life. The Christians linked it with SALVATION, RESURRECTION, and REGENERATION. In point of fact, the central purpose of the Cross Ritual is precisely to *awaken* man’s spiritual life from its present “sleep” or latency by *activating certain key centers on the Tree of Life*. It is the most simple,

> direct, safe, and effective means by which one can shift the “gears” of his consciousness, tap the reservoir of latent spiritual energy that exists within him, and establish a conscious “bridge” or rapport between his conscious and superconscious.
>
> It is through the ritual of the Cross, that the leap is made between the “state of nature” and the “state of grace,” between normal and spiritual consciousness, and that the Initiate links with his “contact point” or “switch of power” in the inner worlds.[2]

In addition to specific spheres of the Kabbalistic Tree of Life connected to the head, shoulders, and breast (and by extension the groin and feet), the four arms of the cross are related to the four cardinal directions, their attendant archangels, kerubim or guardian animals, and classical elements. The center of the cross is where the mystery resides. This is often given the domain of the spiritual void, the Hebrew letter *shin* in Hermetic Kabbalah and the rose of the Rosicrucians. The letters *I.H.S.* and *I.N.R.I.* alone or with a five-petal Tudor rose can also be seen in Protestant designs of the cross. These symbols also have exoteric, esoteric, and initiatic meanings that are called into consciousness whenever the ritual is performed.

DESTRUCTION OF AN EGREGORE—FIRE AND SWORD

To remove oneself from the influence of an egregore, particularly a religious, esoteric, or even political one (especially when a ritualistic formula is actively present, such as in National Socialism, Communism, any form of idealization of the leader or the particular creed or code),

the objects connected with the organization or movement must be destroyed. Fire is the principal means of separating the energetic link and destroying it. This separation and destruction is on a personal level but can also be extended to the larger group as well.

That is why occupying armies often destroy the symbols of their defeated enemy. For example, the revolutionaries in France in 1789, the Soviet Union to Nazi Germany in 1945, the Chinese Communists in Tibet in 1959, the period of the Cultural Revolution from 1966 to 1976, and the destruction of monuments, texts, and places of worship by various Islamic fundamentalist paramilitary forces are among the most obvious examples in modern history. While the spiritual or intelligence aspect of the egregore will continue to live for a very long period of time without a physical anchor, devotees, or rituals to feed it, its emotional or astral counterpart will not be able to sustain a presence in the physical world as a result of such acts of destruction.

Hence, some egregores may be reinvigorated even after centuries or millennia of disuse, which is a closely kept secret of operational magic. According to an article published in 1929 in an esoteric journal edited by Julius Evola, and detailed in appendix 2 of this book, it was efforts to revive the egregore of the Roman Empire that led to the political ascendancy of Benito Mussolini. The initial signs were “seen” in 1913 and were fully realized in 1919. This means that according to tradition, an egregore can be modified, with an existing weak or even “dead egregore” (of a long since vanished cult) being easier to modify during the process of its revival than an existing strong and vital one. This is what we may be seeing when we are told of the cyclic opening and reawakening of Christian Rosenkreutz from his “tomb.”

When ancient books or other objects or people were ritually destroyed by fire, the phrase “and not even their

names or signs remain" is taken to mean a complete obliteration of the physical representations of the cult so that its egregore will have no contact point in the physical world. This may be the reason that, whereas common malefactors were traditionally hung (or in the Roman Empire crucified), and higher-class offenders were beheaded (a privilege accorded to St. Paul and later to kings and queens), witches and heretics were burned at the stake.

OCCULT AND ESOTERIC AFFILIATIONS

The following letter was sent to noted physicist, occultist, and magician Joseph Lisiewski, Ph.D., and published in his quarterly journal *Howlings from the Pit.* It was later republished in his book of the same title, which was compiled from journal articles and the correspondence it generated. The letter was originally published anonymously. Its content strongly demonstrates the subtle and pervasive influence of a magical egregore.

> For several years my [magical] tools have been sitting in a wooden chest beneath my altar, wrapped in colored silk cloths and rarely used. I learned a great deal about myself, and magic, in the process of making them. In particular, that it is the making of the tools that is the magical act and not their consecration. This is anticlimactic at best. Second, that from the making, that it is the preparation or journey that is important—it defines how we experience the end goal. In this case, preparation for a ritual is more important than how well we perform the ritual; in fact, our performance is an expression of how well we have prepared, as are our results.

Destroying my [magical] tools was a modest price to pay, as I did enjoy making them and they reminded me of many good times with friends and co-workers on the journey. To destroy them was to move on, and this was clear. So, on a Tuesday, the day of Mars, I took an ice pick and in a clean stroke defaced each tool after saying a short prayer—audibly—thanking the tool for all that I learned from it, and that with this stroke its energy was released and our connection broken. The lotus wand was snapped in two, the sword hammered and bent, the blade of my dagger bent as well, the cup wrapped in its silk and smashed, and all was consigned to water and fire to eliminate any residual etheric links.

With the snapping of the lotus wand, the first tool, a tremendous amount of energy was released and I felt freed. This was a genuine visceral feeling. This point must be emphasized.

The result was, by the end of the destruction of these tools, my sensory and mental clarity was dramatically increased, my connection to the material and sensing the spiritual in the material (Kether is in Malkuth, and Malkuth is in Kether) enhanced, and above all a tremendous opening in my solar plexus.

This opening was like a tunnel of energy moving out from me and somehow, like a wormhole, as there was only the end points and no sense of the line of connection itself, a link to my pituitary (in the lower back of the head).

When I was able to perform my nightly meditation, I lit my candles, sat, and as I relaxed a distinct sphere of energy formed around me at a

> distance of approximately nine feet. This occurred on its own, and came through my solar plexus. What normally would have to have been initiated by myself, simply manifested on its own.[3]

REFUGE IN AN EGREGORE?

As was pointed out, there is disagreement from a theological point of view concerning the possibility of the existence of positive or healthy egregores. One can strongly argue that *in the end, ultimately,* from the perspective of either supreme illumination or enlightenment, all egregores are at best restrictive forces from which we must free ourselves. As French alchemist Dubuis was fond of saying, "At the end of Time when you present yourself to the Father, to the Naught, and you are asked, 'Who are you?' you will reply, 'I am freedom.'"

Yet for many a positive egregore is a spiritual refuge, a port in the storm of life, and they should be understood and utilized as such. Again, we quote Mouni Sadhu who points out how to avoid coming under negative psychic influences of either magic or an egregore.

> The Hermetic Tradition recommends the one universal defense against invultuation [creation of images of people for the purpose of magical enchantment]: DO NOT SLEEP in the sense of being passive or distracted. . . . (1) Pray . . . whoever is fearless is hard to invultuate for any danger; (2) be occupied with the defined forms in your consciousness, chosen and generated by yourself, in order that something will not be attached to you from outside. . . . Join a certain good Egregor, which corresponds to your contemplation, so that you will

> not be entangled with the Chain of a foreign, evil Egregor. . . . (3) Exercise your body reasonably. . . . Therefore do not be that crayfish, retreating to the puddle, do not let the wolf and the dog frighten you, and then drops of your blood will not be strewn along the paths of service to each and everyone.[4]

Point One—Do Not be Distracted

The dictum to not be distracted also applies to daily consciousness. One should simply not allow one's mind to wander with television or radio playing. Nor should one mindlessly and aimlessly click on pages on the Internet or play video games as a means of filling in a sense of boredom during the day. Perform one's tasks with full attention and then move on. The media and its attendant sounds and images are extensions of various egregores. Limit exposure to them, and do so consciously. Make every thought a prayer by filling the mind with the ideas and images that best serve it.

Point Two—Defined Forms in One's Consciousness

Here we pick images and even learn how to generate them so that we are in control of our own mind and not prey to external forces. "Defined" means that there is no ambiguity about their meaning or presence, and therefore the ability of an outside agency to manipulate us with an idea or image is reduced or eliminated. To this end we then are able to choose if and when we want to become part of an egregore, and in this we understand why we would choose to do so, rather than blindly acting out of hope or fear.

Point Three—Exercise Your Body

“Healthy mind, healthy body” is the key to not being sluggish and easily distracted. The physical world is the world of *action;* learn to be active, and let thought, word, and deed combine to achieve desired outcomes—that is the essence of magic.

DO-IT-YOURSELF DEPROGRAMMING

Removing oneself from the influences of an egregore is more than simply walking away from a group—it is a total reorientation of one’s life goals and direction. For this reason it is often difficult to do, for it’s the same thing as demonstrated in deprogramming from destructive mind-control cults (DMCC). It is important to note that all egregores are cults in the classical sense of the word, but not all are cults in the modern pejorative sense. Regardless, the amount of emotional energy, social dynamics, shared goals and values, and “family” identification and structure all combine to make it emotionally painful and difficult to extract oneself—by oneself, without some form of support—from an egregore.

Again, this process is not limited to religious and spiritual constructs and is easily seen in a variety of life experiences. There is always that one person who is unable to move beyond their high school or college years—particularly those involved in sports. Why? Well, there is the obvious sentimental link. However, there is also the reality that sports activities are collective ritualistic events in which a great deal of sexual energy is sublimated into a psychic force around a given identity—often the school mascot—with a specific and clear purpose. The whole function of cheer-leading is the enhancing of sexual and psychic energy by way of music, costumed animal figures, and logos. It is

nothing less than a religious ritual wherein the participants are united in a single identity and purpose.

We can also see the same phenomena in those who have undergone military service. Even if their term of enlistment was short and uneventful it is not uncommon to witness these men twenty and thirty years later wearing olive drab shirts, military surplus hats, “baseball caps” with service logos. There may also be military-related bumper stickers on their motor vehicles. And as we have stated, mass media also produces similar cult phenomena around individual performers, shows, and movies, with fan clubs and cultures developing around them. The recent phenomena of fictional stories taking on a scriptural dimension is clearly stated in the use of the term *canon* to describe that which is in the “original” presentation versus that which is fan created or comes later. This religious dimension should not be overlooked or lightly dismissed, for it points to the psychic and spiritual weakness of contemporary culture.

One should not expect to extract oneself from the psychic influences of an egregore simply because physical contact with it has ceased and memories associated with it have been removed. A plan, purpose, and meaning for life is needed to fill in the psychic and physical gaps that are left. As a significant life-changing event, removing oneself from the influences of an egregore and the physical entity that supports it has many similarities to adjusting to life after retiring from a career, dealing with death, or overcoming addiction. Depending on the length of time one was in a particular association, a period of mourning is to be expected, and the entire process of extraction, a comprehensive understanding of the related events, and the realization of a new direction may take up to two years. It is easy to say that for every year one is involved with the egregore it can take a month for the process to work itself

out. While this is just a general figure, it at least gives a benchmark for the healing and rebuilding process.

For now, should you wish to free yourself from some unwanted influence, take action in keeping with the following points. Even if you are not sure if you want the break to be permanent but are simply testing yourself to see how much of an influence various ideas or activities may have on your life, the following will be of assistance to you.

Place everything associated with your identified egregore in a box. Place the box out of sight in your closet or give it to someone to hold for the duration of this practice: one month minimum, and six weeks ideally. Now, during this time, notice where your thoughts and feelings are unconsciously directed. Pay attention to the frequency of your ideation. Also during this time begin to think about what—if anything—you would hang in the place of the old photograph, book, or statue. What will you do with your time? What will you create? How will you express yourself? And with this, notice any negative feelings that arise when you consider doing something outside of the old egregore, as well as the joy and positive feelings that arise when you imagine your new possibilities and achievements. You may find a way to balance the two, or you may choose to go back. You may also move in a different direction, but whatever it is that you do it will be from a position of individual choice, self-expression, and freedom.

“CONTROLLING THE NARRATIVE”

The entire action of an egregore, be it a political philosophy, family history, cultural mythos, or initiatic organization, can be summed up in the commonly heard phrase *controlling the narrative.* Controlling the narrative means to be in

control of the story, of the story you want people to hear, believe, and act upon—all three parts must be present. It is not sufficient that they hear it; they must also *believe* it, and from that position of belief act in the manner that the narrative is directing them to. Again, this is not always a negative, and there are egregores that are healthy for some people—one need only look at the number of people who overcome addictions, health concerns, or emotional distress by interacting with healthy support groups.

When removing ourselves from the influences of various groups, however, we need to recognize that now we must define and control the narrative—the story and its values—of our own life. This can be done by reading what was once considered “forbidden” literature or undertaking activities previously frowned upon. This is not to encourage reckless behavior or self-indulgence but rather to show that many of the things various groups discourage their members from doing are relatively harmless. This also means not simply reading other points of view but also actively taking them on for a period of time and finding value in them, even if one does not buy in to them completely, thereby exchanging one controlling egregore for another. In fact, being widely read about the very topic one was once devoted to can help heal the wounds caused by slavish and idealized devotion to just a limited view of it. Typically such devotion is made out of ignorance and a desire for safety rather than knowledge, self-awareness, and courage.

CONCLUSION

Ideas and Their Consequences

In the end we can see that if the ancients are correct, then egregores are also living beings. An egregore has a body, a mind, and a purpose that sets it apart from other beings—including other egregores—and it has the power to act on all three levels: material, psychic (emotional), and mental (ideas). It feeds off the emotions of those who participate in it and fulfills certain expectations and desires of its creators and followers.

It is functionally irrelevant, except for academic definition, if an egregore is understood to exist only in the classical sense or if we can consider a thoughtform an egregore. It is also equally irrelevant if thoughtforms as actual psychic entities exist either—as modern media has demonstrated that ideas (or memes) are constructed with the intention of manipulating mass opinion and, thereby, public activities. The effectiveness of memes at becoming "alive" (i.e., "going viral"), even if for a short period of time, has been demonstrated. All mass media, advertising, marketing, the psychology of crowds, and even the often bantered-about idea of "archetypes" are operative expressions of the ideas and actions put forth in ancient and modern occultism regarding "egregores."

We are surrounded by these creations, and we participate in their lives as they participate in ours. What matters is that we as individuals become aware of the fact that the daily information bombardment we are subject to is neither innocent nor without consequences. Each and every idea has a function and competes to a greater or lesser degree for our attention and, with it, for our life force and energies on all levels. To truly grasp the power of ideas we must stop thinking in terms of “good” and “evil.” Good and evil are simply constructs; they have no rooting in any singular, absolute, and universal doctrine or experience. This is terrifying to consider, but it is a reality known well by those who create egregores—be they channels of esoteric initiation or political memes. To extend this to its completeness we must accept that “there is no such thing as good or evil, only ideas and their consequences.”

Recognizing this reality is the first step in defeating it. Learning how to understand our own mind, the power of suggestion, and to consciously set goals and choose our own path—even if that means participating even temporarily in egregores that are healthy for us—are what allow us to become masters of our own lives and not pawns in the life of someone else.

APPENDIX I

Personal Accounts of Disengaging from an Egregore

It is very clear that many people have positive experiences with various organizations and their attendant egregores. However, at some point this *may* change. For the sake of comparison we have provided several examples of individuals who extracted themselves from three very different spiritual organizations. These examples are dramatic and have been chosen for this very quality. It is up to each reader to compare the statements of the following people with their own personal experiences to see if there is anything that may be of value to them in better understanding their own spiritual journey.

“THE GREATER THE ESCHATON, THE TIGHTER THE SCREWS OF THE EGREGORE”

Former member of a Tibetan Buddhist organization

My experience with a well-respected Tibetan Buddhist group ended after twenty-seven years of involvement. I had joined

only a few years after the group started, when it was small and intimate, and when things were being done in a “yogic fashion.” Its philosophical emphasis was on what is often called non-duality and one’s personal and direct experience of it. I was involved in transcribing oral presentations, editing books, and even some ghostwriting. Most importantly, I was on very close personal terms with one of the head teachers, a native-born Tibetan, something critical in old-school lineages.

As the organization grew, the inherent missionary ambitions of Buddhism expressed themselves powerfully. This involved the organization taking on more projects, particularly in India and elsewhere. As this happened the organization’s tone began to change, with a greater emphasis placed on exoteric Buddhism and domestic and foreign building projects—including temples, stupas, and even shrines—along with the needed attendant training and support of monks and nuns in India and punctilious rules following eclipsed non-duality.

From the beginning of my exploration of Buddhism, I maintained a long and extended study of publications by well-respected Tibetologists, who were themselves sympathetic to the traditions. It became clear that there were disconnects and schisms between what the teachers were saying about the history and doctrines and how they actually developed. Along with the building projects that the organization undertook came an increasing insistence and fixation on Shakyamuni as sole architect of this tradition. Total acceptance and belief in Shakyamuni as the source of all things “Buddhist” was required, and no deviation was accepted. To do otherwise was viewed as a lack of faith, understanding, and even could be viewed as rendering the practitioner “worthless” or “unworthy” of the teachings.

The history of polemics against the old school of Tibetan Buddhism describes it as an extremely eclectic and

heterodox body of doctrine—much of which is patently non-Buddhist. Emphasis on Shakyamuni as the source of all nine levels of Tibetan Buddhist teachings was simply disingenuous. In fact, the idea of Shakyamuni as a great innovator was itself open to considerable debate. When Buddhism is compared to the Upanishadic-Vedic culture that predated and was contemporaneous with him, it becomes clear that Shakyamuni was not the great innovator and cultural rebel that we are told he was. Scholars of Indian religious and philosophical history see him as another teacher within the matrix and not as a unique figure. In fact, he courted royal favor with enthusiasm to raise funds for his own building projects—monasteries and temples. All he did was change the formatting of the essential message, which was the same: the purpose of life is to become enlightened.

Then there was the fine-sounding rhetoric pertaining to the absolute divinity/perfection of the universe right here and right now. In point of fact, Buddhism draws, maintains, and enforces a clear-cut hierarchical and often condescending distinction between itself and everything else. With this is the assumption that one will happily carry on this “family business” of “planting the triumphant banner of THE dharma worldwide.” There will be no innovations, because the teachings have been revealed perfectly, transmitted perfectly, and will always *be* perfect. If you cannot do this, or if your life journey takes you elsewhere, then it is clear that you are not ready for these teachings. Or you may have some qualities that are lacking—faith is usually the answer—and as an unworthy vessel perhaps, in your next life, you may be better equipped to spread the dharma—if in fact you even encounter it.

This was very different from what I had encountered in Indian philosophy expressed in the Bhagavad Gita, where each individual was said to have his or her own dharma or purpose, and that it was better “to die following your own

dharma than to thrive with another's dharma." Here, in Tibetan Buddhism, there was not a multiplicity of dharmas—not one for each person—but one: *the* Buddha dharma.

Such investigations and conclusions were not particularly countenanced but also considered as close as one could get to blasphemy in Buddhism. Then one day I was introduced to this idea of egregores and was told, "Lama's vision is not and does not have to be your vision. You can have your own vision about your own life and what you want it to become." While this was really quite obvious, here I was at fifty years of age having a crisis about my spiritual path. I needed something that was not so confining and culturally conditioning. As my awareness grew I realized that I needed something that was not so tied to this grand scheme of enlightenment—and that my personal enlightenment was not in fact in some way tied to the growth and success of this or any organization. But in truth, my personal relationship with my spiritual preceptor over time was creatively conflated with the larger missionary objectives being exposed.

I respected the accomplishments of the lama and all that he had done for me, but I did not share the aspirations of a worldwide dharma and had no desire to participate in a worldwide movement at the cost of my own self-awareness. I served him, not the mission, out of respect and love, and yet the mission was becoming the entire focus of all activities.

The more I questioned, even as I continued to serve, the harder it became to be "a good practitioner." The reason for this was that while the rhetoric defined a good practitioner in terms of actual practice, increasingly it was clear that a good practitioner was one who was a valuable and effective functionary of the cause—the egregore.

If you chose to manifest your compassion as constantly mandated by Buddhist institutionalization in any manner other than direct material support of the institution, it was deemed to be inferior. Mandated practices for directing your compassion for all “sentient beings” are very specific, and what is left out is clearly designated either by inference or direct statement as being unimportant.

The practice known as Confessions of the White Stainless King gives a correcting mechanism for all ideas and practices that deviate from the accepted behavioral and doctrinal norms. For me, despite claims of not being a religion, the fact is, Buddhism (and Tibetan Buddhism in particular) is an organized, hierarchical structure requiring total submission—all in a pleasant manner, with a smile, and in a subtle and suggestive manner—but submission all the same.

When, after thirty years, the first Westerners were named as lamas (teachers), we were told to have unquestioning deference to them. And yet, to many of us who had been there from the beginning, these three lamas, who clearly had zeal for the mission, did not have spiritual depth.

When I began to examine more closely how the teachings were being presented, I also became aware of the importance of this, as one was part of the Bodhisattva Army that would be victorious against the “barbarians” (Muslims) at the end of the Kali Yuga (Age of Iron). This was a critical doctrine in the various schools of Tibetan Buddhism in general and in the Kalachakra teachings in particular. This apocalyptic notion was not dissimilar to other versions I had heard from various Christian and New Age groups, and it seemed that “the more dramatic the eschaton, the tighter the screws of the egregore.” As I was being held on to ever more tightly, it was clearly in service to the cause, to be a soldier in the future spiritual army, but not so that I would

come to my own self-awakening. Increasingly service to the cause was all that really mattered, as that is what was asked for, emphasized, recognized, and rewarded.

So, after twenty-five years, I extracted myself. It was not easy and it still is not at times, for I had built a life around it, and leaving my spiritual father was the hardest thing for me to do.

After two and a half years I can reflect and say that it truly was like undergoing the four stages of grief along with a do-it-yourself deprogramming course. There are many reasons why what we were involved in was called the Golden Chain Lineage, and possibly this was the unspoken one. In the end I felt that my personal growth was being compromised and that this was clearly a spiritual corporation whose survival and growth was more important than that of any individual save its leader. What cannot be stressed enough from my experience is that the egregore is profound. Simply thinking about and sharing my experiences is liberating and allows me to be free of its influence for good.

“IT WAS LIKE SOMETHING OUT OF H. P. LOVECRAFT!”

Former Member of a Worldwide Initiatic Fraternity

My experience with egregores was to some degree terrifying. It was when it all came undone that I began to understand that something tangible, but of a psychic nature, had been implanted in me. The death of the grand master was a surprise to many, despite his declining health, recent hospitalization, and a lifetime of bad habits—smoking among them. Their surprise demonstrated to me that those with whom I was working simply were not paying attention.

Something else was clouding their ability to see what was really going on.

But this is not uncommon in many organizations; I saw it in several religious movements I had been involved with, and even in day-to-day relationships. This was different though because, despite my wishes to the contrary, I was the acknowledged heir apparent of the domestic branch of a well-known international initiatic order with an impressive pedigree going back two centuries. The grand master had often stated a certain displeasure with how things were turning out. Specifically that—despite thirty years of dedication to the cause—the order had never been able to get more than a handful of lodges operating, and by the time of his passing it would be down to one. There was the usual problem of schism and pedigree-chasing that has plagued twentieth-century Western esoteric movements, but this was something more.

I noticed that over the previous few years upward of 80 percent of the officers of the order died before reaching the age of sixty-five, and from unusual and debilitating blood diseases. If we included the general membership, this number was still a staggering 20 percent. One of the more peculiar cases was that of a young woman who had been the number one recruit for several years. It was discovered that she had an extremely rare genetic blood disease that interfered with her pregnancy.

While I was not present for the passing of the grand master, his time of death was noted by those in attendance. At the moment he died I felt a violent illness and pain in my chest, as if something was being ripped out. It was severe enough that I considered paying a visit to the emergency room. Apparently I was not alone in this experience. “Recruit number one” had the same experience as well, and as a medical professional she had also considered a late-night visit to the emergency room. This was then followed by

several days of strange dreams, the need to vomit, heart palpitations, a burning sensation in the solar plexus moving in to the heart and rushing out my hands, and an acute asthma attack (which I have not experienced in more than thirty years).

Since the funeral, which I was unable to attend, my health has returned to normal and my dreams have stabilized. Based on my experiences with other esoteric movements, I believe that what occurred during the period immediately following the death of the grand master was a direct result of the psychic influences of the egregore that had been carefully cultivated for more than two centuries, and its relationship to the officers and members of that particular branch of the organization. This notion was reinforced by the fact that when I took down the framed initiation certificate from the wall of my temple, I noticed a palpable lightness in my house. I have since burned the exceptionally beautiful black robe given to me by a fellow member who died from cancer soon after trying to start an independent lodge. (His goal had been to splinter from the mother order and join with a schismatic group in the event that the grand master should die or suffer some form of mental fatigue.)

Of the lodge that I was in, everyone except me came to a strange fate. One, an immensely talented, strong, and clear individual, lost a fantastic job opportunity in the artistic field after moving across the country to pursue it. Another lost his job at the United Nations, ended up being transferred four hundred miles away, and couldn’t sit in the east in his lodge as he had hoped. Another member died of multiple horrible blood cancers. He was recently retired and had spearheaded the chapter. I watched him die choking on his own bodily fluids when the dialysis ceased to function only two years later. He was in agony, fearful, and heavily drugged. Another member was looking at thirty years in

prison for embezzlement. He was found not guilty. He prayed constantly and is a true man of faith. Then there is me. I have been spared through no grace or skill of my own. I attribute it to constant prayer, a loving wife who steered me back to sane choices, and the love and grace of God.

“DO NOT CALL UP THAT WHICH YOU CANNOT PUT DOWN!”

The Strange Case of Charles Dexter Ward

The order that I was involved with, once upon a time, was set up with a nationwide series of Golden Dawn–style temples, which can really be conceived of as so many schools. Each school was administered by three people: a *Cancellarius* in charge of examination, a *Praemonstrator* in charge of education, and an *Imperator* in charge of the artistic direction and overall vision. All three had specific roles in the ceremonies of the school and all of them used inner mystical techniques, during the work, of introducing students to each degree of the school.

As mentioned, the Imperator directed the vision of the school, so this person had a lot riding on them. There were also Imperators that acted as agents at large of the organization, not necessarily tied to individual schools, helping wherever their talents were called for. The Imperators were in turn guided and instructed by a single person order-wide: a Chief. The Chief’s main job was to act as ambassador for entities called “the Secret Chiefs,” so-called because (1) they were the guiding forces legitimizing the school’s existence and (2) only the Chief had contact with them. They were, at best, literally spirits directing the school, and at worst, figments of the imagination of the

Chief. The best way to describe the Secret Chiefs was that they were aspects of the unconscious of the Chief, whether or not they had any objective existence.

Needless to say, the Chief was necessarily an intuitive person, and their work as seer for a school like this made them even more so. But what was not generally understood about the Chief working with this particular school was the nature of his involvement with the occult. It all started in the 1970s, if I remember these conversations clearly. Simply put, the Chief originally had no involvement with the occult at all and was unfortunately introduced to the world of spirits through a complete psychotic break. He described it as a sudden explosion of light coming out of his head. He was cataleptic for about a month and was briefly institutionalized. It is unknown as to how he eventually regained his mobility, but he eventually recovered and happened to take along with him an extraordinary capacity for dissociated states. This sounded very much like what Carl Jung and Joseph Campbell described as a shamanic illness, or precursor to some kind of awakening.

Due to his admittedly amazing talents for communicating with spirits, witnessed by myself firsthand more than once, he gradually developed an entourage of occultists around him. His favorite method of communication was via a Ouija board, but really he was an almost completely open medium, without requiring the use of any tool.

The Chief eventually made contact with a group of spirits who were interested in pursuing work with a Golden Dawn–style temple structure, with the spirits themselves as the directors. In other words, the spirits would become the Secret Chiefs. The individual spirits changed every few years, but all arrived and departed around the general theme of establishing an occult school. His original entourage then became the first generation of Imperators. It should be stressed that the spirits themselves endorsed the

Chief as someone who would convey their teachings without alteration.

But unusual though the Chief ’s talents were, other aspects of his personality were undeveloped and infantile. In many ways, as a result of his mental illness, he had the discipline and ethics of an eight-yearold child. The best way to describe the effect of his mental illness was that the boundaries between his conscious and unconscious selves were either comparatively thin or nonexistent, and his personality had very little strength to resist anything unconscious. His position as monarch of something as flimsy and ill-defined as a “spiritual school” gave him a degree of autonomy that could be nothing short of terrifying.

There were outbursts of rage, confusion, or just plain old raving. Lust was a constant problem; he would attempt to seduce any woman who came near him. There was one report of rape, and another of molesting a teenager.

This put the entire school and the Imperators in a terrible situation: Would they simply shut down this school that they had spent decades building up? Would they “depose” this Chief and thereby lose contact with the Secret Chiefs?

Some Imperators invented a third option: establish contact with the Secret Chiefs themselves and ignore the Chief without actually ousting him. He had grown older, his psychiatric medication kept him a bit more stable, and he had since married someone who tended to keep him grounded.

But this contact by the Imperators had to happen outside of the Chief ’s knowledge. Communication with the Secret Chiefs was his only source of influence; he was not a strong user of the techniques of the school otherwise, and he would never broach a threat to his position.

The first contact by an Imperator with the Secret Chiefs was done by a very talented, secretive prodigy of the

Chief's. (I think that this happened sometime during the 1980s. Although contact work was always done in some way by that first generation, Secret Chief contact was reserved for the Chief alone.) This prodigy then slowly, carefully, secretly trained the other Imperators. This all happened against the original wishes of the Secret Chiefs, who seemed to recognize the need for this action.

This, we hoped, would ensure that we as individuals, and the school in general, would survive the more mad reveries of the Chief. But as it turned out the nature of the Secret Chiefs and the egregore that they formed was a major contributor, not just to the mental illness of the Chief, whom they had first contacted, but to the corruption and eventual destruction of the school as a whole. I believe that a few factors were involved here.

1. The Secret Chiefs, who had formed the egregore, were relentlessly demanding of superhuman effort. They invented techniques like staying for days inside closets and whipping recruits. The sheer difficulty of obeying the Secret Chiefs dissuaded many aspirants from continuing. People simply burned out. The few left were frightening zealots, making graduation from the school unattractive.
2. Contact with Secret Chiefs was a coveted prize for some people and gave access to a lot of techniques that were otherwise unknown. With that contact came power, and without humanizing elements like nurturing and basic mental hygiene, the power made people maniacal and cruel. (Given this effect on people who were mentally stable, one can only imagine the effect on a person recovering from a mental illness.)

I hope that this little story helps anyone who is aspiring to head any spiritual organization to understand the kinds of forces that may be at play and the need to exercise basic wisdom and common sense. Just because the spirits want someone in charge does not mean that you are obliged to listen to them. Remember, *you* are in charge of your spiritual path, not spirits, not Chiefs, and not Imperators.

As a postscript, I'd like to add that the methods used by the group were incredibly effective in inducing mystical states of consciousness but had the terrible side effect of moderate to total brainwashing.

APPENDIX II

An Account of the Revivification of an Egregore

Late in 1929 an esoteric Italian journal edited by Julius Evola carried the following narrative, describing how a group of occultists had attempted to revive the egregore of the Roman Empire, using Benito Mussolini as their instrument.

THE “GREAT SIGN”: ON STAGE AND IN THE WINGS

At the end of 1913, signs began to appear that something *new* was summoning the forces of the Italic tradition. These signs were directly perceived by us.

In our study, without anyone ever knowing how it could have got there, we found a sheet of paper. On it was sketched a route, a direction, a place. A route beyond modern Rome; a place where the presence of the ancient City survived, both in its name and in its silent and august remains.

Later indications received through one who then served us as intermediary between the bodiless and the embodied, confirmed the place, specified a mission, a date, and a person entrusted with it.

It was in the period sacred to the force that *raises* the sun in its annual course, after having touched the magical

house of the Ram: in the period of the *Natalis Solis Invicti* [birth of the unconquered sun] and in a night of menacing and rainy weather. The route was followed. The place was found.

The fact that nobody noticed the unusual nocturnal expedition; that the person who guided us recalled nothing afterward; that no meeting occurred, and then that the grille of the archaic tomb was open and the guard absent—all that was naturally willed by “chance.” A little scraping revealed a cavity in the wall. Inside there was a longish object.

Long hours were needed to remove the outer wrapping, resembling bitumen, hardened by centuries, which at last revealed what it had protected: a band and a scepter. On the band were written the signs of a ritual.

And the ritual was performed month after month, every night, without fail. And with astonishment we felt the coming of forces of war and forces of victory; and we saw shining in its light the ancient and august figures of the “Heroes” of the Roman race; and a “sign that cannot fail” was sealed by the bridge of solid stone that unknown men built for them in the deep silence of the night, day after day.

The horrendous war that broke out in 1914, unexpected by any others—we foresaw it. We knew its outcome. Both were seen in the place where things are before they become real. And we saw the potent act that an occult force willed from the mystery of a Roman tomb; and we possessed, and still possess, the brief regal symbol that would hermetically open to it the ways of the world of men.

1917. Various events. Then the collapse. Caporetto [defeat of Italian troops by Austrians].

A dawn. In the limpid Roman sky, above the sacred Capitoline Hill, the vision of an Eagle; and then, carried by its triumphant flight, two coruscating warrior figures: the Dioscuri.

A sense of greatness, of resurrection, of light.

In the midst of devastation by the tragic news of the great war, this apparition spoke the hoped-for word to us: a triumphal announcement was already inscribed on the Italic calendar.

Later, in 1919. It “chanced” that the same forces, using the same person, communicated to him who now heads the Government—at the time, director of a Milanese newspaper—the announcement: “*You will be Consul of Italy.*” It was likewise “chance” that the ritual form of augury was transmitted to him—the same as on the pontifical key: *“Quod bonum faustumque sit*” [May it be good and fortunate].

Later. After the March on Rome. An insignificant fact, an even more insignificant occasion. Among those who paid homage to the Head of Government, a person clothed in red came forward and handed him a Fasces. *The same forces willed that:* and they willed the exact number of rods, the way of cutting them, and the ritual binding of the red ribbon; and they also willed—once again—the “chance” that the ax for this Fasces should have been an archaic Etruscan ax, to which equally mysterious ways led us.[1]

FOOTNOTES

*1 Martinism is a Christian mystical movement rooted in the teachings of Louis Claude de Saint-Martin (1743–1803). Saint-Martin was a student of the Portuguese theurgist Martines de Pasqually (1727–1774) but was later deeply influenced by the writings of Jacob Boehme and turned away from the magical path. Saint-Martin's writings and teachings influenced diverse lines of students across France, Germany, and Russia. During the nineteenth century's French Occult Revival, Gerard Encausse (1865–1916), better known as "Papus," combined many of these streams into the Martinist Order. The Martinist Order and its numerous variations have played a major role in European and American esotericism in the twentieth century.

*2 The Kali Yuga is the last of four ages, or cycles, in classical Indian astrology and plays a predominant role in Indian and Tibetan Buddhist cosmologies. The Kali Yuga is dominated by strife, war, violence, and pronounced suffering as a result of spiritual ignorance. According to tradition, the Kali Yuga will end in a cataclysmic battle between the forces of spiritual enlightenment and materialism, and with it, a new spiritual age will be ushered in.

*3 Thelema is the main religious and philosophical movement established by Aleister Crowley after a series of revelations from a disembodied entity named Aiwass in 1904. The result of these encounters was Crowley's

writing of *The Book of the Law.* The focus of *The Book of the Law* is that each individual is responsible for discovering their own “True Will” or purpose for living. The motto of those who follow this path is “Do what thou wilt is the whole of the Law. Love is the law, love under will.”

†1 Assassins is the name used to refer to an eleventh-century Islamic sect that was famous for carrying out the murder of political, military, and religious leaders. Their use of drugs and mysticism combined with military training made them one of the most feared organizations for three centuries and gave rise to the word *assassin* as we now know it—a secret killer for hire.

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